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Christmas campaign to combat loneliness 'epidemic'

BY JACK DIXON
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RENEWED efforts are being made to offer a hand of friendship to the thousands of elderly people in Hammersmith and Fulham who will spend Christmas alone this year.

Age UK estimates that there are currently around 4,000 people in the borough who are over the age of 75 and living on their own.

Many of these people are set to celebrate Christmas alone and the charity says one in four will be dreading the festive period without friends and family.

Age UK has launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness about the loneliness 'epidemic', which is considered to be a growing problem even in London.

And extra efforts are also being made locally in a bid to make sure the older generation do not miss out on the festive celebrations.

A three-course community meal was laid on at the Latymer Upper School last week, and up to 300 people will be fed and watered at the Town Hall in Hammersmith on Christmas Day itself.

More than 80 volunteers helped out at the event last year, with members of the community and local businesses making donations of food, gifts and other materials to make the festive bash possible.

In the run-up to Christmas, a new council-funded befriending service is also being launched at Bishop Creighton

TURN TO PAGE 3

■ GOLDEN WONDER: Chelsea Building Society is applauding generous people in Fulham who helped raise a staggering £700,000 for the Marie Curie charity. The building society's 'Hour of Need' campaign set out to generate £500,000 by December 2016 – enough to support over 25,000 hours of nursing care for people with a terminal illness and their families. But thanks to the strength of public support, the fundraising target has been reached a year early with the current total standing at a staggering £700,000. Pictured is Marie Curie nurse Lola Rowe receiving an early Christmas present from Santa at the Chelsea Building Society in Fulham. SEE PAGE 4

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Football campaign to combat extremism wins world support

FOOTBALL FOR UNITY

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Heathrow expansion idea crash-lands

FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE

THE Mayor of London believes the Government's decision to delay a verdict on where to build new aviation capacity in the south east is a clear indication they are beginning to realise that the obstacles in the path of expanding Heathrow are insurmountable, and that a third runway can never be built there.

This week he urged the Government to end decades of debate by definitively ruling out expansion at Heathrow and giving proper consideration to building a bigger and better airport on one of several potential sites to the east of the capital. The evidence presented to the Government by the Airports Commission already makes it clear that looking east of London would offer the greatest economic potential and is the only feasible way of giving the country the aviation capacity it needs for the long term future.

Mr Johnson said: "Today is the day that the Heathrow campaign was officially grounded. They have put a superhuman effort into bouncing the Government into a quick decision in their favour but the Prime Minister and his colleagues have refused to allow themselves to be hustled. The wheels are falling off the Heathrow fuselage and I think that, now the Government has hit the pause button, they will begin to understand with ever greater clarity that, due to the environmental impacts, the legal obstacles and the cost to the public purse, this bird will never fly.

"But delay is not the answer. While Britain's European rivals continue to forge ahead with the construction of multi-runway mega-airports, I have long argued that the most dynamic and forward-looking approach would be to look at the sites east of London where a four-runway hub airport could be built.

"To get to that position we need the Government definitively to rule out Heathrow expansion. I believe that tthis latest announcement makes that much more likely."

A new four-runway airport to the east of London would:

- Connect the UK to more than 300 international destinations – far more than any alternative.
- Serve 176 long haul destinations, more than an expanded Heathrow and an expanded Gatwick combined.
- Provide direct connections to new and emerging markets and important economic centres like Belo Horizonte in Brazil, Calcutta in India and Chongqing in China.
- Serve 16 UK cities, many more than an expanded Heathrow or Gatwick could hope to serve.
- Support 25 per cent more jobs nationally than a three-runway Heathrow and offers the greatest economic potential for the United Kingdom.
- Expose less than five per cent of the people exposed to significant aircraft noise by Heathrow today – at best, the numbers exposed would be virtually zero.
- A new hub would not exceed EU air quality limits or risk delaying UK compliance.

Since his election in 2008 the mayor has made clear that his mayoralty would take a creative and open minded approach to the challenges facing the capital. He consistently argued that the reason expansion plans for Heathrow or Gatwick have been debated for several decades is that neither is the answer to the problem.

A feasibility study into the possibility of building an airport in the Thames Estuary and two major reports on the need for new hub airport capacity published during his first term as mayor put the possibility of expansion away from Heathrow or Gatwick firmly on the public agenda. When the Government announced the establishment of the Airports Commission in 2012 the mayor made very clear his determination to engage with every aspect of the research carried out by the Commission.

The mayor's team submitted hundreds of pages of independent research to the commission, which clearly showed the limitations at Heathrow and Gatwick compared to the incredible economic potential of expansion to the east of London. When the commission rejected any possibility of building at Stansted or in the Thames Estuary (despite acknowledging that the benefits associated with building to the east were potentially greater than any of the other options they considered) the mayor predicted that proposals to expand Heathrow would run into exactly the same hurdles they had met in the past, and that the recommendations made by the Airports Commission would swiftly be made "irrelevant" – as now appears to be becoming the case.

It is clear expansion at Heathrow airport is impossible. A three-runway Heathrow would effectively be full shortly after opening, would expose one million people to unacceptable levels of aircraft noise and risk major EU fines for air pollution. It would simply be an environmental catastrophe and would never pass the legal, political or financial hurdles in its path.

The options for a four-runway hub airport to the east of London at Stansted or in the Thames estuary were discarded prematurely and the Government should give proper consideration to the only feasible plan, which is to build new runway capacity to the east of London where there is the space to build an airport of the size Britain needs to compete with its European rivals.

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■ **BACK IN TIME: Two books celebrating the Fulham of yesteryear are proving to be a big hit with readers, with more than 2,000 copies now sold. The two publications – *Old Sands End, Fulham* and *Old Fulham* – were penned by local historian Francis Czucha and include dozens of high-quality images taking a nostalgic look back at 20th century Fulham. Mr Czucha said: "I'm so pleased my books are still proving popular." Pictured right: a performance by the Fulham Municipal Light Operatic Society, and (inset) author Mr Czucha.**

Call to provide free parking for shoppers

BY JACK DIXON
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COUNCIL chiefs have been urged to scrap parking charges close to high street shops in a bid to boost trade for small businesses.

Zac Goldsmith MP, the Conservative candidate for London Mayor, said some councils were sending the "wrong message" by asking shoppers to pay for parking.

Hammersmith and Fulham council currently operates 20p 'stop and shop' bays at five locations in the borough.

But Mr Goldsmith, the MP for Richmond Park, has called for more London councils to introduce 30-minute free parking windows to promote local shops. Following 'Small Business Saturday' earlier this month, the mayoral hopeful said: "Charging local residents for parking when they visit their local shops sends the wrong message and discourages people from supporting local businesses, which are such a vital part of our community."

Mr Goldsmith said he wanted to see the scheme rolled out to more high streets across the capital, making it "easier and cheaper for Londoners to visit their local shops".

Drivers are entitled to free parking for half an hour in some pay and display zones in several London boroughs, including Ealing and Hounslow. Schemes offering free parking for 20 minutes are also available in Harrow and Merton.

The 20p 'stop and shop' bays have been in operation in Hammersmith and Fulham for almost five years.

The scheme enables drivers to park at a cost of 20p per 30 minutes for a maximum of one hour. It currently operates in Askew Road, Blythe Road, Fulham Road, Wandsworth Bridge Road and the Coomer Place car park.

But the council says cutting out charges altogether would encourage shop workers to occupy the bays for long periods.

Councillor Wesley Harcourt, the council's cabinet member for environment, transport and residents' services, said: "We offer 20p 'stop and shop' bays on key high streets and are determined to do everything we can to protect and improve our high streets and town centres."

Figures released by the RAC Foundation last week revealed that English councils pocketed a £700 million surplus from their parking operations in 2014/15. Hammersmith and Fulham council earned the fourth highest 'profit' in the country – £23.8 million – from its parking operations.

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said: "The financial sums involved in local authority parking are huge and the overall profits eye-watering. And once again the year-on-year direction of travel is upwards. It is unsurprising that London leads the way in making money. Its roads are most congested and the pressure on road space immense."

Government guidelines state that "raising revenue should not be an objective of civil parking enforcement" for councils.

■ **PARKING CALL: The Conservatives' London Mayor candidate Zac Goldsmith has called on councils to introduce 30-minute free parking schemes for shoppers patronising local stores.**

New efforts to offer friendship to the lonely

FROM PAGE 1

House. The scheme, H&F Connect 55+, aims to match older residents with a volunteer that they can meet in person or over the phone.

Councillor Sue Fennimore, the council's cabinet member for social inclusion, said: "Loneliness can have a devastating impact on the health and wellbeing of older people and it is on the rise in London."

Recent research by Age UK revealed that as many as 40 per cent of elderly people described their pet or television as their main form of company. Around one in 10 people over the age of 65 said they felt cut off from the rest of society.

The Campaign to End Loneliness warns that accident and emergency departments deal with a high number of socially isolated elderly people over the Christmas period, and that those who live alone will typically visit their GP more often.

Campaign director Marcus Rand said there were serious public health risks associated with isolation.

"The effect of loneliness on mortality exceeds the impact of well-known risk factors, such as obesity and dementia, and has an influence equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day," he said.

"If that wasn't enough, loneliness is also linked to an increase in use of NHS services, and this demand on the NHS will only increase as our population ages and grows."

Mr Rand said local councils and service providers needed to become better at finding "hidden" people within the community, who are often the most at risk of developing problems linked to loneliness.

He added: "We also need to see commitment from this government to help local authorities reach those most at risk of loneliness.

"Unless we do more and put loneliness at the centre of a health and wellbeing strategy for us all it will continue to cut lives short."

■ **CONCERN: Councillor Sue Fennimore says that 'loneliness can have a devastating impact on older people'.**

Feeling lonely in Hammersmith and Fulham? Age UK offers:

■ Free home visit companionship or befriending services

■ Free tutor-led furniture recycling workshops in Hammersmith for older men to build social networks and enhance skills funded by the Big Lottery and Hammersmith United Charities

■ 'Spread the Warmth' scheme, offering social events including coffee mornings, music recitals, cinema screenings and dog walking.

■ A pilot scheme in 2016 offering over-65s interested in history and museums visits to lectures and exhibitions.

■ Age UK Hammersmith and Fulham: 020 7386 9085.

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Lots of interest in building society's charity campaign

CHELSEA Building Society is wishing people in Fulham a very 'Marie' Christmas after they helped to smash a fundraising target for the Marie Curie charity.

The building society's nationwide Hour of Need campaign aimed to raise £500,000 by December 2016 – enough to support over 25,000 hours of nursing care for people with a terminal illness and their families. But thanks to the strength of public support, the fundraising target has been reached a year early, with the current total standing at an astonishing £700,000. Society colleagues have also volunteered over 3,000 hours of their time in Marie Curie shops, hospices and street collections throughout the campaign.

To celebrate, the Chelsea Building Society branch in Fulham, on North End Road, held a Christmas-themed thank-you event earlier this week.

Neil Murray, manager of the Fulham branch of Chelsea Building Society, said: "We are so proud that customers in Fulham have helped us to make this the society's most successful ever national fundraising campaign . The Hour of Need campaign is having a real impact on terminally ill people and their families and we will continue to raise even more money over the next 12 months."

Dr Jane Collins, chief executive of Marie Curie, said: "We would like to say a huge congratulations and thank you to all the society staff and customers who have supported the 'Hour of Need' campaign so far and made it such an overwhelming success.

"Raising more than £500,000 with more than a year left of the campaign is truly amazing and will make a real difference to people with a terminal illness and their loved ones across the UK."

■ THE GIFT OF CARING: Marie Curie nurse Lola Rowe receives an early Christmas present from Santa at the Chelsea Building Society in Fulham.

Guns amnesty gets firearms off the streets

AN AK-47 assault rifle was handed in to the police during a two-week firearms amnesty.

The deactivated weapon was presented to officers from Hammersmith and Fulham Police as part of the Give Up Your Gun campaign.

Across London, several shotguns, air weapons and other imitation firearms were also handed in, while at least 11 bags of ammunition were surrendered.

The amnesty ran from November 23 to December 6, offering Londoners the chance to safely dispose of firearms by taking them to a police station and handing them in.

Under the terms of the surrender, people handing over weapons will not face prosecution and will remain anonymous.

Detective Superintendent Stephen Clayman, of the Trident and Area Crime Command, said: "The tragic events in Paris have inevitably led to a heightened state of alert on the capital's streets.

"Gun crime, whilst low in London compared to other world cities, has a devastating impact on communities.

"Trident is committed to ridding the capital's streets of firearms and last year Met officers recovered over 600 lethal-barrelled firearms."

■ CEASEFIRE: This AK-47 was handed in to police.

The 2014 gun surrender, which formed part of a national campaign, was the first in London for six years. More than 350 firearms and 12,300 rounds of ammunition were collected.

This year's haul also included shotgun cartridges handed in to Kensington and Chelsea police as well as a handgun and ammunition in Westminster.

Detective Chief Superintendent Joanne Chilton, the head of the National Ballistics Intelligence Service, added: "Gun surrenders provide an important opportunity for people to hand firearms over to police to prevent them falling into the hands of criminals and endangering the public.

"We are pleased that the Metropolitan Police Service are running this operation."

You decide on social housing

COUNCILLORS have backed the recommendations of a residents' commission to transfer Hammersmith and Fulham's entire social housing stock to a new, independent organisation.

The council will now give residents a vote on whether or not to follow through with the plan. The commission's report, published last month, advised that a resident-led housing association would be able to secure funding to pay for repairs to council homes.

If approved, all 17,000 of the borough's council homes will be transferred to the new organisation.

Council leader Stephen Cowan said: "We are genuinely trying to do things with people – not to them – so we will now put this to a vote and let the residents decide."

Martha's dress helps homeless

AN evening gown designed by a Fulham teenager is to be auctioned for charity following a competition to find the next top fashion talent.

Martha Tromans, 13, a pupil at Lady Margaret School, saw her blue gown brought to life after impressing local couturier Antonia Pugh-Thomas.

Around 300 budding designers took part in the competition but Martha's design was chosen as the best of the bunch. The dress is now on display in the window of Antonia's shop in Fulham Road and will be auctioned on eBay later this month, with all proceeds to be donated to the Glass Door charity, which works to support homeless people in west London.

Can Tube provide platform for advertisers and improve Underground's bottom line?

BY GEOFF BAKER
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THE next train to arrive at platform two will be the Harrods Express on the Amazon line to Elephant & Marmite.

Cash-strapped Transport for London is to open up the Tube for advertising sponsorship in order to raise billions of pounds and prevent a hike in fares.

Trains will be "wrapped" in sponsors' colours and logos as part of a new commercial development plan that aims to raise £3.4 billion over the next ten years.

Underground stations could also be re-named for special promotion periods and branded in the names of popular products.

The imaginative and ambitious plan has been confirmed by TfL, which is reeling in the wake of a £2.8 billion reduction in Government grant funding and other massive costs.

The radical plan, under which Tube trains would be repainted and branded like many taxis, has won the enthusiastic backing of the capital's advertising industry as it would present vast opportunities for companies to promote themselves to the 1.3 billion passengers who use the Underground each year.

"What a gift to Adland, branded Tube Trains. I wish I was still working on Smarties—we could even have different coloured round cushions inside like the sweets," said advertising consultant Billy Mawhinney, former executive creative director with J. Walter Thompson.

"It's never a great experience at the best of times travelling underground, but what a great way of getting revenue and really brightening up the journey to and from work.

"I love the idea of getting the Colgate Toothpaste Tube first thing in the morning. Finally someone could really have some smellyvision and have mint-fresh smelling carriages.

"Like all great advertising opportunities it's a truly wonderful blank canvas. I can't wait to show it to my clients."

A TfL spokeswoman said wrapping Tube trains in advertising logos and slogans was part of the plan that aims to avoid increases in fares by developing new ways of raising non-fare revenue.

"We have already trialled the scheme, which began when the Mexican Embassy wrapped a train during the Rugby World Cup," she said.

Besides branded trains, entire Tube stations could also be renamed for promotions in return for sponsors' cash – Baker Street station could become Quality Street station to advertise the Nestle chocolates.

The sweets giant has already started the advertising ball rolling. In April this year TfL sold the naming rights to Canada Water station, which was rebranded for 24 hours as Buxton Water to tie in with the London Marathon.

The station's roundel signs featured the name of the Nestlé-owned mineral water and there was branded artwork throughout the building and platforms.

However, the publicity stunt was not popular with Underground staff.

A spokesman for the RMT union, which represents Tube workers, said the sponsorship undermined the "public service ethos" of the city's transport network.

"It's part of the whole marketisation and corporatisation of the transport service when people are struggling to get access to Tube and DLR services because of pressures on them," said the union spokesman, who said that the RMT would resist any attempts to rename stations permanently or to make staff wear uniforms bearing corporate brands.

"We think it's the thin end of a very long wedge. You could have the whole Tube network with branded stations for private gain."

Although TfL is facing clashes with the union over the ad plan, which could see the birth of Swiss Air Cottage, Kentucky Fried Park Corner and a promotion opportunity for the online gifts company, Not On The High Street Kensington, transport chiefs say they are determined to press ahead with their commercial development plan, which has the potential to also raise money through rent rises for its 1,000 in-station retailers and exploiting its vast land portfolio.

"We are looking to raise £1.1 billion from property development," said the TfL spokeswoman.

On New Year's Eve, TfL will pocket £120,000 through a sponsorship deal with the travel search engine Kayak, which will enable Londoners to travel for free on the night.

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Game on! World leaders back

■ NATIONAL SUPPORT: Football Association chairman Greg Dyke, left,joins England manager Roy Hodgson in endorsing the Football for Unity initiative piopneered by Kensington-based Dr Shamender Talwar and Anna Prior.

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

WEST London's amazing soccer-based Isis-buster Football For Unity has now grown into a team of 1,400 teenage players who'll soon be playing in Downing Street, Vatican City and on the White House lawn as world leaders clamour to join their statesmen-studded supporters' club.

The incredible Make Goals Not War movement – which blocks Islamist internet radicalisation and gang culture by turning at-risk youngsters onto football instead – now has Prime Minister David Cameron, President Obama and Pope Francis cheering on their pioneering squad.

Football For Unity has become London's fastest-growing youth sensation – going from just 10 players in April to 1,400 now. Every week scores of new faces are arriving to join Tuff FC [The Unity of Faiths Foundation Football Club] at their training ground in Southall and now the chief of the Football Association and even England's national team manager are signing up to the new unity spirit of the game too.

The astonishing speed of growth in the movement – which is being driven on social media as teenagers all over the capital enthusiastically pass the word on Football For Unity – has astonished its founders, Kensington-based Dr Shamender Talwar and Anna Prior.

"I have never known or heard of anything like it, everybody now wants to be part of this. The popularity of Football For Unity has touched a pulse and the reaction is amazing, it's wonderful," said Dr Talwar.

"It's working because through football we are making kids of all different faiths feel unified and feel British. Multicultural Britain is the real winner here and the kids are feeling that. They are blown away at the worldwide interest in them."

Even though many of them are too poor to afford trainers, let alone kit, teenagers are coming in droves to Tuff FC's after-school practice sessions at the Swift Road Sports Centre in Southall every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

"We had 70 new kids turn up last week," said Dr Talwar, "Kids are coming from Wandsworth, Camden, Kensington, Tower Hamlets, Stockwell, Brixton, from all over the city – they are hearing about Football For Unity from their mates on social media and they all want to join in. We've got no money for kit and it's expensive to hire the training pitches at £100 an hour, but I can't turn them away.

■ BEAUTIFUL GAME: Youngsters on Westminster Green at the launch of Football for Unity in October.

"You can't say no to a child at risk of radicalisation who is coming to us in hope but who can't even afford a pair of trainers. We're needing to hire 14 pitches now. I don't know how we will fund it but we will find a way."

But hopes are high that the money or sponsorship will now come as world leaders queue up to be part of the Football For Unity movement as it now goes global, scoring at every stage:

GOAL! Last week Dr Talwar and Ms Prior went to 10 Downing Street to meet the Prime Minister's team. They are now arranging a five-a-side game in Downing Street and Dr Talwar asked if David Cameron would like to referee. The PM's special advisers told them Mr Cameron won't ref the match – because he wants to play in it instead.

GOAL! President Obama has invited Football For Unity players to visit him at the White House so that he can roll out the scheme across the USA. If an airline can give Dr Talwar's team free flights, he will take 100 players and will stage a game – with the President – on the White House lawn.

GOAL! Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and head of the Catholic bishops of England and Wales, is taking Tuff FC players to meet Pope Francis at The Vatican to get his blessing for Football For Unity and to fix a game in St Peter's Square.

GOAL! England manager Roy Hodgson is now supporting Football For Unity along with FA chairman Greg Dyke. Mr Dyke has asked for talks with Dr Talwar in order to get full FA accreditation for Tuff FC and to expand the project.

GOAL! Spanish soccer titans Atletico Madrid are sponsoring Football For Unity and now want to roll out the project to teenagers across Spain.

GOAL! This week Football For Unity is meeting with Sport England, who want to partner the scheme and extend it to local sides all over the country.

GOAL! The President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, has called Dr Talwar and Ms Prior to Brussels in order to get Football For Unity games played all across Europe.

GOAL! Soccer icon Diego Maradona has become president of Football For Unity for Latin America. He said, "I am very pleased to be part of this beautiful project, helping the children and creating opportunities for their future."

GOAL! The Mayor of Molenbeek, the Belgian town revealed to be at the heart of the jihadist threat after the Paris terror attacks, has asked Tuff FC to play a game against the town's team as an inspirational example of how football can steer teenagers away from radicalisation.

GOAL! Tuff FC won the Sports Initiative of the Year prize at the recent prestigious Pride Of Britain awards.

"Something that started small in West London is now growing into something very big worldwide," said Dr Talwar.

"Football For Unity has been established to promote unity amongst young people around the world through the beautiful game of football. It provides a platform for cultural exchange, promotes health and wellbeing, and nurtures aspiring young footballers."

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football's campaign for unity

■ SIGN OF THE TIMES: This was the moment when football legend Diego Maradona signed for Kensington-based Football For Unity by officially agreeing to be president of the charity in Latin America. Football For Unity, launched at the House of Commons in October, is part of the Unity of Faiths organisation, set up by Kensington social psychologist Dr Shamender Talwar and former Mayfair antiques dealer Anna Prior, which has won worldwide acclaim for its initiatives in eliminating radicalism. Maradona, 55, said at the event: "I am very pleased to be part of this beautiful project with Football for Unity, helping the children and creating opportunities for their future."

LWN

LONDON WIDE

Their future is all in the game

Football initiative created here will unite communities all over the world

■ SOL SUPPORTER: England footballing legend Sol Campbell presents Football For Unity founders Dr Shamender Talwar and former Mayfair antiques dealer Anna Prior with a *Daily Mirror* sports award in recognition of their initiative. Right: how the *London Weekly News* reported the launch of the innovative Football for Unity process earlier this year.

■ UNITED: Enthusiastic young footballers mark the launch of Football for Unity on Westminster Green earlier this year, when the London Weekly News revealed the new project to combat radicalisation and gang crime. Pictures: Richard Austin

WHEN football legend Diego Maradona signed for Kensington-based Football For Unity in the autumn – by officially agreeing to be president of the charity in Latin America – the worldwide impact of the fledgling initiative suddenly became apparent.

Football For Unity is part of the Unity of Faiths organisation, set up by Kensington social psychologist Dr Shamender Talwar and former Mayfair antiques dealer Anna Prior. It has rapidly won worldwide acclaim for its fresh approach to eliminating radicalism.

The relationship between Maradona and Football For Unity (FFU) blossomed after he sent a video link message of support during the House of Commons event expressing his excitement at the prospect of working with children via FFU.

Back in October, founders and trustees of FFU with their legal team, Mr Sarosh Zaiwalla and Mr Lawrence Jacobson of Zaiwalla & Co. LLP, gathered to welcome Maradona and his legal team led by Matías Morla at London's Intercontinental hotel during a press conference. And *London Weekly News* reporter Jack Dixon was there to see history being made.

Maradona told the *London Weekly News*: "I am very pleased to be part of this beautiful project with Football for Unity, helping the children and creating opportunities for their future."

The legendary Argentinian footballer and World Cup winner has served as a manager and coach at a number of clubs as well as the national team of Argentina. Many experts, football critics, former players, current players and football fans regard him as the greatest football player of all time.

Marcus Faraji trustee co-founder of FFU and Mariano Menéndez President of Forbes LATM, said: "Football For Unity are extremely excited and pleased to have Maradona on board as he is a truly world class representative of football."

The FFU projects will be set up worldwide, scaling up from successful existing initiatives in the UK and Spain, to provide structured games, training, facilities and health awareness education.

This will be targeted to groups of young people from diverse local communities who will benefit from improved integration through sport. Alongside this, sessions on nutrition, behaviour, conflict resolution and equality will engage youth and teach them to lead better lifestyles.

Dr Shamender Talwar and Anna Prior, co-founders of Football For Unity, said at the time: "We are so proud to say that the world's greatest ever footballer has signed for us, a British charity helping and supporting many youths around Britain and worldwide through the beautiful game of Football."

Among the high-profile figureheads to endorse the scheme in October was the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn who was mobbed as he stepped onto Westminster's Speaker's Green.

Mr Corbyn said: "I think it's a brilliant initiative and it's nice that we've got it here in Parliament on this small area of green outside the Speaker's House and we've got representatives from Athletico Madrid talking to us about football coaching and football opportunities."

Asked if the initiative could transform lives, Mr Corbyn added: "I'm absolutely sure of it because young people from all backgrounds need to be together as well as having their own identity and that's really what modern Britain and modern London is about."

At the launch, Virendra Sharma, MP for Southall, commented: "A lack of education and ignorance creates barriers. Many are burdened with prejudices against black, Asian or white people; against Muslims, Hindus, Jews or Christians; against the poor or the rich; the slow or the clever; the skinny or the obese; the disabled, the homeless, the jobless. Hatred of anyone who is different has no place in our new global community. Knowledge is key to tackling hatred and education is at the heart of Football for Unity.

"Our very special thanks go to the children who have made history through the launch by coming together in the House of Commons and showing unity. This represents a closer step to a better understanding of tolerance and peace."

■ LABOUR OF LOVE: Jeremy Corbyn MP, leader of the Labour Party joined Football For Unity founders Dr Shamender Talwar and former Mayfair antiques dealer Anna Prior at the launch on Westminster Green of their ambitious football initiative.

FURTHER UPDATES NEXT WEEK

Award proves we're best in Europe for volunteering

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

HAVE-A-GO Londoners have won the capital the crown as the best city in Europe for volunteering, beating 10 other cities to become the best example of a big society.

London scooped the European Volunteering Capital 2016 award in recognition of the innovative programmes that Mayor Boris Johnson has developed as a legacy of London 2012, when volunteering took centre stage at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Since then, the mayor's volunteering initiative Team London has mobilised over 120,000 active volunteers, including 60,000 school children and young people.

Team London led the successful bid with support from local volunteer centres and Greater London Volunteering. The accolade is awarded by the European Volunteer Centre, a network of agencies which promotes volunteering across Europe.

Mr Johnson, said: "I'm very proud that London has been recognised as the top volunteering city in Europe. Tens of thousands of Londoners are now giving a hand to others and helping to make London a cleaner, greener and more welcoming place for everyone. Team London has created an incredible volunteering legacy for the capital, with people of all ages and backgrounds giving up their time to make the city an even better place to live in."

The other candidate cities for this year's title were Belfast, Bruges, Cagliari, Cascais, Edinburgh, Lucca, Perm, Rome, Varese and Viterbo.

London's achievements that were recognised by the expert judging panel include:

■ Mobilising over 120,000 active volunteers including over 60,000 schoolchildren and young people

■ Delivering the UK's first speed volunteering app

■ Supporting nearly 1,600 charities and offering grants of over £3 million to date

■ Signing up over 100 businesses to offer employer-supported volunteering through the Mayor's Corporate Commitment. Some 65 per cent of employees now say that they would be more likely to work for an employer that encourages volunteering.

■ Offering innovative recognition for volunteering through a guaranteed interview scheme for young volunteers seeking paid work experience or full-time jobs.

The mayor's senior adviser Veronica Wadley, said: "This is not only an extraordinary legacy of 2012, but it also shows that with will, every leading city can deliver the big society. More and more people are now taking social action in their local area and increasing numbers of businesses understand the value of volunteering as a route in to work. Some 70 per cent of our young volunteers are assessed as work-ready compared to just 20 per cent of the normal pool of job candidates.

"With continuing problems of youth unemployment, we've demonstrated that volunteering gives people the skills they need to compete in the job market and this model could be adopted by any city in the world. Team London looks forward to capitalising on this honour by working even more closely with the voluntary sector and businesses to drive greater impact for London's communities."

Director of the European Volunteer Centre, Gabriella Civico said: "London is an outstanding example of how local government, local people and businesses can strategically harness the benefits of volunteering to improve people's lives, the environment and contribute to socially cohesive communities."

Milestone for new police HQ

THE new headquarters of the Metropolitan Police was officially 'topped out' earlier this month by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh.

In the heart of Westminster and close to the Met's founding location, the Curtis Green building is undergoing a refit and security upgrade and will become the new HQ at the end of next year.

The move is part of the Mayor of London Boris Johnson's drive to put bobbies first by selling off underutilised police buildings and redirecting funds into frontline police services.

As part of the biggest programme of transformation in the Met's history, the sale of the outdated New Scotland Yard, now to be known as 10 Broadway, for £370million will help modernise and streamline London's police service, saving money, keeping officer numbers high and equipping them with the latest technology to enable them to be more effective, more mobile and more accountable. The relocation to the slimmed down new premises on the Victoria Embankment will save an additional £6million a year in running costs.

Since 2012, the mayor's programme has helped to cut costs across the Met by £391million. The Curtis Green building has been empty since late 2011.

■ FROM GRASSI WITH LOVE: Bond Girls as you've never seen them before are on exhibition at the Ransom Gallery until Christmas Eve. The Pimlico Road gallery has landed the UK exclusive of the latest 007 works by famous Italian painter Marco Grassi, highly-collected by young bankers. 'Grassi has painted nine Bond girls in an edgy contemporary style, realism plus a layer of fantasy, repeating his favourite neon colours of hot pink, turquoise and acid green,' said a spokesman. 'As in *Goldfinger*, he uses real gold, the gold leaf which is a current feature of his celebrated work, inspired by the Russian icons of Moscow and St Petersburg.' Grassi has had solo and group exhibitions all over the world. Recent shows in Miami, New York City, Moscow, Milan, Bologna, Perth Australia, Montreal, Los Angeles, Aspen, Positano. The spokesman added: 'His paintings attract a young affluent public, for their glamour and extraordinary technical ability. They are all different, but alike with tousled hair, full lips, and a powerful confident stare.' Pictured above is Barbara Bach in *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977) and below is Britt Ekland in *The Man With The Golden Gun* (1974).

Carol service raises £13,000

WITH the generous support of residents, local businesses, celebrity readers and pupils from a local school, Royal Borough Mayor, Councillor Robert Freeman, raised nearly £13,000 for his mayoral charity at a carol service held at Our Lady of Victories Church in Kensington earlier this month.

The Mayor's charity is supporting lung cancer research at Royal Marsden and The Royal Brompton hospitals.

The packed congregation heard poetry, prose and readings from the Bible given by Lady Ella Windsor, Penny Junor, Cerys Matthews, Andrew Pierce, Melanie McDonagh and Liz Arnold. Soprano Marie Macklin delighted the audience with a solo piece, accompanied on the piano by her husband, Timothy Teague (who also played the organ for the evening). The church was filled with song from Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School's VI Form choir, which earned rapturous applause at the end of the service.

The evening was rounded-off with mince pies donated by the Ivy Restaurant, which is soon to open a brasserie on Kensington High Street.

Guests at the service heard the medical directors of the Royal Marsden, Professor Martin Gore, and The Royal Brompton, Professor Tim Evans, speak of the advances in understanding lung cancer and finding ways to treat it.

Professor Gore said: "The door to finding new treatments is ajar and now is the time to push it open. That is why the financial support given by the Mayor's Charity has the power to make such a difference."

Councillor Freeman, said: "I am hugely indebted to all those who gave their support to my charity this evening.

" Monsignor James Curry, my chaplain, made his church available to us and gave us the warmest of welcomes. The readers and musicians gave their time so willingly and the guests responded with great generosity for my charity. It was such a lovely occasion and has done much to help research into lung cancer."

Red, white and blue... it's Santa

FATHER Christmas and his reindeer will visit Stamford Bridge next week as the football ground kicks off its season's celebrations with a Festive Family Fun Day that's free for everyone to attend.

For one day only, on Tuesday, December 22, the Fulham Road home of Chelsea Football Club will be transformed into a mini festive winter wonderland, inviting visitors to count down the final days before Christmas in a fun-filled day of food, drinks, craft stalls and activities for all the family to enjoy.

The day will feature a host of special guests, including everyone's favourite, Father Christmas, who along with his reindeer will join a group of real penguins in a fantasy festive grotto with log cabin and flickering lights. The children can let their imaginations run wild before whispering their Christmas wishes in Santa's ear, only having to wait three days to see if they come true.

Simon Hunter, head of venue and brand at Stamford Bridge, said: "Our venue is at the heart of the Fulham and Chelsea community and with so many residents on our doorstep, we're looking forward to welcoming as many as possible to Stamford Bridge for a day of pure fun and good old-fashioned festive entertainment."

■ The Festive Family Fun Day at Stamford Bridge takes place on Tuesday, December 22 from 11am to 4pm. Entry is free.

■ CHALLENGES: The Westway Trust says it will address 'diversity shortfalls' on its management board.

UNDER THE WESTWAY

Trust will tackle its diversity shortfalls

Westway Trust Chief Executive Angela McConville discusses the importance of diversity to the success of any organisation and explains how the Trust will address its own diversity shortfalls

OVER the last few weeks Westway Trust has been putting in place measures that will begin to address the urgent gaps in diversity on our board. The board is not adequately representative of the local community and so far we've not moved quickly enough to fix that.

While ethnic diversity is the most urgent and obvious area we need to address, we are also working to ensure that we are representative in terms of age, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, socio-economics and every other aspect of the local community as well.

To discharge our stewardship responsibilities for the estate and to facilitate the best use of the spaces for a community as diverse as North Kensington, now and in the future, we need a broad mix of skills and experience.

A lack of diversity and inclusion is not exclusive to Westway Trust. It is a problem in many charities, and most big companies, but those who have addressed it have felt the benefits. Not only are they better able to represent their community, to call on a wider pool of talent and to get a broader range of ideas but it demonstrably improves their performance.

Companies who have women on their boards perform better than those who don't; a diverse workforce reduces staff turnover meaning the best employees don't move elsewhere; and companies with high levels of diversity say they are more innovative and creative.

Currently at Westway Trust we have two vacancies on our Board. This presents us with a terrific opportunity to make quick progress in improving the diversity of our trustees. Our board is made up of three trustees elected by our 50-strong membership of local organisations; three trustees are nominated by the local council, giving us a link to local democracy; and up to six trustees are openly recruited based on their skills, expertise and community insight.

One of our current vacancies will be nominated and elected by our Members and we have told them that we would particularly welcome the nomination of black and minority ethnic candidates. The other place is an open, independent one, and after listening to what people have said to us at recent meetings and to the strong feelings among particular groups we have decided to limit the candidates in this round of recruitment to those nominated by our Member organisations and the Westway 23 group.

A diverse trustee board won't mean we can pat ourselves on the back and stop listening. It's also not enough to assume that because we're open to partnership with every part of the community that we've done enough to reach everyone who would like to get involved. We are currently at the early stages of a comprehensive review of our equality and diversity policies, and will be getting expert external benchmarking and creating an action plan that covers not only staff recruitment but every aspect of our work and communications.

I know every one of the trustees that sits on Westway Trust's board cares deeply about the value of the space to the community and gives their time for free to make sure it is managed properly but good intentions are not good enough and to work in partnership with the community we need to be representative of it.

It will take time to make the changes that need to be made and along the way there will be mistakes but it is something we are committed to and it will mean the space under the Westway better serves those around it.

FOLLOWING last week's report on the campaign to install lifts and steps-free services in all Tube stations in Kensington and Chelsea, organisers say they have been inundated with calls from residents wanting to sign the Change.Org petition that is now supported by more than 1,700 – but many cannot find the link to it. We are happy to provide the link – which is:https://www.change.org/p/royal-borough-of-kensington-and-chelsea-installs-lifts-in-kensington-amp-chelsea-tube-stations

SHOP LOCAL FOR A CHANCE TO WIN FABULOUS PRIZES!

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING PASSPORT

Collect stickers when you spend money at the 12 market stalls and 12 local shops listed here.

Entries submitted by 4pm on Friday 4 December will be eligible for an extra chance to win one of five **£20 shopping vouchers** on Small Business Saturday UK, **5 December 2015** at a prize draw at 11am in Tavistock Square W11.

All entries submitted by 5pm 24 December will be eligible to win one of **5 main prize packages** (worth at least £100 each) donated by the participating businesses. Main prize winners will be notified by email on 9 January 2015.

Visit these market stalls and local shops to collect stickers:

Golborne Deli
100 Golborne Road W10 5PS

Ola's Apron
Penny Market Afro-continental food stall

A Piece of History Vintage
china & home decor stall

Brocant
vintage interiors stall

Frankstylist
vintage fashion stall

Goldsmith Vintage
253 Portobello Road W11 1LR

Steve Ullathorne Photography
photographic art stall

Cafe Eve
281 Portobello Road, unit 15

The Chinese Tea Company
281 Portobello Road, unit 14

Danaqa
281 Portobello Road, unit 23

Nottii Hill Salon
281 Portobello Road, unit 19

Sapelle
281 Portobello Road, unit 7

Unora
281 Portobello Road, unit 23

Van der Brit
Vintage fashion stall (Friday & Saturday)

Jamon Jamon
paella stall

The Spice Shop
1 Blenheim Crescent W11 2EE

Cameras London
antiques stall (most days)

La Cave a Fromage
148-150 Portobello Road W11 2DZ

London International Silver Co
antiques stall (Saturday)

London Tree House toy shop
146 Portobello Road W11 2DZ

Portobello Cutlery
antiques stall (Saturday)

Simone Salandini
jewellery stall (Friday & Saturday)

Vintabellas
antique china stall (Friday & Saturday)

Book & Kitchen
31 All Saints Road W11 1HE

Use the map above to find your favourite participating shops and traders. The colour of each business corresponds to the colour on the map. Don't forget to get a sticker for every £5 you spend (limited to 2 stickers per business).

For full details please see www.rbkc.gov.uk

your local market

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

150 YEARS Portobello & Golborne MARKET

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

■ AT YOUR SERVICE: TON Thursday, November 26, Land Securities unveiled a new name for the public space between the Zig Zag Building and Kings Gate on Victoria Street, Victoria. This space, known currently as Kings Gate Walk, has been re-named Angela Hooper Place, in honour of Cllr Angela Hooper CBE who died in 2010 following a lifetime of service to the people of Westminster as a councillor.

Time running out to have a say on ambitious Crossrail 2 plans

LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

TRANSPORT chiefs are encouraging the public to have their say on controversial proposals for Crossrail 2 as the consultation on the new railway for London and the South East enters its final month.

Launched by Transport for London and Network Rail in October, the latest public consultation on the proposed new railway closes on Friday, January 8. It has already attracted thousands of responses, with many people attending the public consultation local drop-in events all along the route from Surrey to Hertfordshire, with over 70 events organised.

The consultation provides the latest plans reflecting comments from earlier consultations. It includes proposals for:

■ Station locations, entrances and exits for the tunnelled section of the route
■ Locations of ventilation shafts for the tunnelled section
■ Construction sites required to build the scheme; and
■ Service patterns and changes to existing National Rail services.

Crossrail 2 will connect National Rail networks in Surrey and Hertfordshire with an underground tunnelled section crossing beneath central London between Wimbledon and Tottenham Hale and New Southgate.

Its supporters say it will enable 270,000 more people to enter central London every morning at peak time, helping relieve the increasing pressure on London's transport network. The railway is also predicted to drive the development of 200,000 homes and 200,000 new jobs.

The project has gathered pace significantly over the autumn. As part of the Government's Spending Review, the Chancellor George Osborne has confirmed a new £300 million Transport Development Fund for the next generation of transport infrastructure projects including Crossrail 2, which is being considered by the newly created National Infrastructure Commission. This is expected to report in spring 2016.

Responses from the public consultation will help shape the proposals for the scheme. Subject to further development and consultation, TfL and Network Rail will then seek powers for permission to build and operate Crossrail 2. With Government funding and approval, construction could begin in 2020 with the first Crossrail 2 service running in 2030.

TfL and Network Rail have held an extensive series of drop-in events along the proposed route throughout November and early this month, with staff on hand to explain our proposals and answer questions. Thousands of people have already attended these events, with many still scheduled across London until tomorrow, December 18. More information on these events can be found on the Crossrail 2 website.

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson MP, said: "Crossrail 2 will be a transformative new transport link that will significantly improve capacity on the rail network into and out of London, thereby boosting jobs, new homes and economic growth in the capital and far beyond.

"Crossrail 2 is a major infrastructure project and so it's vital that we get it right from the start. This consultation is key to helping us to shape the proposals and to ensure that everyone with a view on Crossrail 2 can have their say and is listened to. We know that there's massive support for Crossrail 2 but we need to get the scheme right to ensure that there is real momentum behind our efforts to get it delivered."

Michèle Dix, TfL's managing director for Crossrail 2, said: "Crossrail 2 is a vital new railway to meet the growing demands of the rapidly growing population of London and the South East, and help support thousands of new homes and jobs across the region, whilst boosting the UK economy.

"Receiving and listening to the public's feedback on our latest proposals is an important part of our plans to develop Crossrail 2. It's been helpful to understand people's concerns as well as receive their support. We have really appreciated that so many people have come to the drop-in events. We have already had a large number of responses to the consultation and I would encourage others to read about our proposals and give us their views before the consultation closes in January."

Chris Curtis, Network Rail's head of Crossrail 2, said: "Crossrail 2 would deliver vital extra capacity to the national rail network and provide new and improved regional connections across London and beyond.

"This consultation is a great opportunity for rail passengers to have their say on what Crossrail 2 would mean for the proposed train services in north east London, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, south west London, Surrey and Hampshire. I'd urge anyone who wants to see a better rail service for their area to get involved over the next few weeks."

The public can give their views on any aspect of the proposals at *www.crossrail2.co.uk* until Friday, January 8. Factsheets, maps and further information on the scheme can also be found online. A consultation report on the responses received will be published in spring 2016.

Fight to stop Chelsea station

■ The No Crossrail In Chelsea group – which recently added rock star Mark Knopfler to its 6,000 supporters – is preparing to field its own candidates against at least 12 current Conservative members of Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough Council.
■ Kensington and Chelsea Council is backing the eight-year construction of a Crossrail Chelsea station, during which the King's Road would be closed for five years.
■ The historic Chelsea Society voted in overwhelming numbers at its AGM to withdraw its support for a Chelsea Crossrail station.
■ Pasta-sauce magnate Loyd Grossman opposes the Crossrail plans for Chelsea. He says: 'The construction of a huge Crossrail Station in Chelsea threatens to significantly damage the distinctiveness, scale and intimacy of the King's Road. Local people and businesses do not wish £1 billion to be squandered on a scheme which will threaten the historic environment of the King's Road, which is a valuable social, cultural and economic asset not only for those who live nearby, but for all Londoners.'
■ Actresses Felicity Kendal and Cheri Lunghi also oppose the Chelsea station proposals.

Warning over fake presents

POLICE and Westminster City Council are warning shoppers to beware that the Christmas presents they buy in central London could turn out to be dodgy fakes.

The alert comes after more than £500,000 worth of counterfeit goods – including teddy bears, football shirts and illegal condoms – were seized in a pre-Christmas raid.

The crackdown followed complaints from shoppers that they had been conned by "souvenir shops" and it targeted 10 stores in and around the Trocadero Centre in Piccadilly Circus.

Among the haul recovered from traders were fake clothing, condoms emblazoned with an offensive slogan and unlicensed Hello Kitty toys.

The raids, carried out by Westminster City Council, Trading Standards, police and UK border agency staff, came after shoppers and tourists repeatedly complained about the price and legitimacy of goods sold in souvenir shops.

A council spokesman said: "We will not stand by and allow traders to flog fake goods, which rip off both honest retailers and the public.

"Our operation with the Met police and partners shows that Westminster's Trading Standards team is serious about tackling this problem in the heart of London. Rogue traders should beware; we will seize your fake goods."

Large quantities of business documents were also seized during the raids – which was dubbed Operation Canton by officials – and one person suspected of being an illegal immigrant was arrested by the UK Border Agency officers.

Sergeant Paul Clooney, from Westminster police, said: "Counterfeiting is often thought of as a victimless crime but it can have devastating effects on local traders who are trying to legitimately sell goods. Customers end up buying items which are often of a poor and sometimes dangerous standard.

"This operation should deter others who think the West End is an easy place to sell counterfeit goods. We will continue to work with partners to target such individuals."

Taxis carry road congestion alerts

TAXI-TOP digital advertising boards are to display traffic information in an innovative trial aimed at cutting congestion in London.

Transport for London have been trialling the technology since December 7 with BrightMove Media to enable the capital's iconic taxis to encourage other road users to avoid congested routes.

Initially, targeted messages will inform road users of traffic levels at 40 to 50 areas where there are known traffic delays. In the future, the technology could be used to provide real-time updates on incidents across London's road network. Messages will be displayed on around 200 taxis fitted with the electronic boards using GPS technology to ensure that the information is accurate and up to date.

The trial is the latest in a range of initiatives TfL says it is undertaking to keep traffic moving in London.

CHELSEA FOOTBALL CLUB
TUESDAY 22 DECEMBER
11AM-4PM
Join Santa & his reindeer for an afternoon of
FAMILY FUN AT
STAMFORD BRIDGE
It's absolutely FREE!
SANTA & REINDEER
PENGUINS
FAIRGROUND STALLS
ICE SCULPTING
GIVEAWAYS & COMPETITIONS
INTERACTIVE FOOTBALL GAMES
FOOD & DRINK
Stamford Bridge, Fulham Road, London, SW6 1HS.
Nearest tube: Fulham Broadway

Community says welcome, Wilko!

ONE of Britain's best loved value home and garden retailers, Wilko, has opened the doors to its newest central London store on Kensington High Street.

As part of an expansion plan into the south of England, the new store – which has created 62 jobs – will be the family business's 381st store in the UK and its sixth in central London.

The 5,833 sq ft shop stocks homeware and furniture, DIY and decorating, health and beauty and garden and outdoor goods.

To mark the occasion on Tuesday, December 8, the Chelsea Pensioners led a ribbon cutting, along with branch manager Harlen Holding and assistant branch manager Barry Chapman.

The Royal Hospital Chelsea, home of the Chelsea Pensioners, a national charity, received a £1,000 donation to its Royal Hospital Chelsea Appeal.

The hospital's corporate partnerships officer, Rachael Ferguson, said: "This donation will help safeguard the home of the Chelsea Pensioners. It is a pleasure to have received such a generous donation from Wilko and we warmly welcome them as part of the Kensington and Chelsea community and look forward to helping them celebrate future successes."

To spread a little festive cheer and help shoppers stock up on garden and home essentials, the first 100 lucky customers through the door received a £5 Wilko gift card in a bag jam-packed full of goodies.

There was entertainment on the day, including festive music from the Brass Santas, while a face painter kept the little ones occupied the following Saturday.

As well as this, Wilko warmed commuters outside High Street Kensington tube station with cups of hot chocolate and mince pies.

Wilko is supporting the St Mungo's homeless charity and, to kick off the partnership, Liza Boon from the charity picked up £250 worth of products from the store to help kit out their shelters.

Mr Holding said: "We're absolutely delighted to have made this move into such a high-profile shopping destination.

"We can't wait to introduce Kensington to our range of great value, great quality products for the whole family to enjoy. The team have worked really hard to get everything in place ahead of the launch, and it's been a pleasure to welcome shoppers into store and to begin long-standing relationships with the local community."

■ SURPRISES IN STORE: The Wilko team outside the popular community retailer's new store in Kensington High Street on their grand opening day earlier this month. Right: entertainemnt is provided for shoppers by the colourful Brass Santas.

■ SOUNDS OF SANTA: Festive tunes are provided by the Brass Santas outside the new Wilko store.

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Singers support Syrian refugee funding appeal

POPULAR Earls Court-based community choir, the Kensington Singers, announced last week that its annual Christmas concert will raise funds for the Save the Children's Syrian Refugees appeal.

Joining the adult choir for the date earlier this week were the Fulham Children's Choir.

All profits from the concert at the historic St Dionis Church in Parsons Green will go towards the work of the organisation.

Taking place on Monday, December 15, the concert, named Home for Christmas, featured Christmas favourites alongside melodies the organisers said would help to keep the wintery weather at bay.

There was music for everyone, including jazz takes on *Carol of the Bells, We Wish You a Merry Christmas, Stopford's A Christmas Blessing, Adam Lay Ybounden* and of course, the wartime song *I'll Be Home for Christmas.*

■ TOP OF THEIR VOICES: The Kensington Singers.

Kensington Singers is a 60-strong non-auditioned choir formed by 2015 BBC Unsung Hero Hannah Brine. In January it celebrates its fifth birthday.

The choir rehearses on Monday evenings at St Philips Church, Earls Court, and has performed in many local venues, entertaining appreciative audiences.

On December 6 the Kensington Singers sang at Duke of York Square, Chelsea, raising funds for Glass Door Homeless charity. The choir thanks everyone who came and supported them for a fun afternoon.

FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

London WEEKLY News

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Downton is dead, long live Victoria!

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

QUEEN Victoria is to become the latest TV sensation as a drama saga set in the early years of her reign is being deliberately-crafted to become the new *Downton Abbey*.

ITV chiefs believe that *Victoria* will pick up all of *Downton's* fanatical following worldwide and after the initial eight-part series starts screening in 2016 the period drama could easily run and run for years.

The royal saga, created by acclaimed novelist Daisy Goodwin, will star the former *Doctor Who* sidekick Jenna Coleman as the young queen and it will share all of the hallmarks of *Downton* – lavish sets, romantic twists, shocking tragedies and life both above stairs and below in the servants' quarters.

Pundits believe that *Victoria*, which will be screened in *Downton's* Sunday night slot, will be such another huge hit with viewers that it will start the birth of "the Victoria Effect", a rush on the fashions, jewellery, furniture and all things early Victorian in the same way that *Downton* caused a craze for everything post-Edwardian.

But the drama is poised to be even far more fabulous than the life of the aristocratic Crawley family, as instead of being set on a fictional Yorkshire country estate, *Victoria* will be set in Kensington Palace and Buckingham Palace.

The first eight episodes will cover just three years – from Victoria's ascension to the throne at the age of 18 in 1837 through to her courtship of Prince Albert and their mar-

TURN TO PAGE 14

■ ROYAL DRAMA: Jenna Coleman in ITV's new drama, *Victoria*.

Harry supports hospital's work

PRINCE Harry was the special guest on Monday this week at a leading London HIV hospital that was supported by his mother Princess Diana.

The prince toured Mildmay hospital to mark its 150th anniversary.

The East London hospital has been at the forefront of specialist HIV care since 1988, when it became the first dedicated hospice for people dying of Aids related illnesses.

Harry was introduced to staff and patients who are living with the disease to discover how the work of medics there has changed over the last two decades.

■ VIP GUEST: Prince Harry.

His visit also marked the official opening of some purpose-built facilities at its new complex.

Staff and patients moved into the premises – which feature a 26-bed inpatient unit and day care services – last September.

Princess Diana – who was the first member of the Royal Family to have contact with Aids victims in a concerted effort to overcome worldwide misconceptions of the disease – regularly visited the hospital in the 1980s.

She toured Mildmay both officially and privately, attempting to highlight the devastating illness and combat the stigma associated with it.

The hospital's director, Dr Ross White, told the Daily Express: "Prince Harry's visit is special because the Princess of Wales, his mother, showed great support for the Mildmay.

"We hope it helps raise HIV awareness and increase knowledge of our work."

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ROYAL LONDON

'Her court is perfect setting for an epic drama'

Victoria's reign set to be storyline for TV's new royal saga

FROM PAGE 13

riage in 1840. But if the series – now being filmed by Mammoth Screen, the makers of the hugely-popular *Poldark* – is the hit that it is widely-tipped to become, *Victoria* could "do a *Downton*" and stretch for an additional five or six series following the queen through 60 more years of her remarkable reign.

Although much of modern culture portrays Queen Victoria as a mourning widow forever in black and hidden away from public life, her early years on the throne were filled with family strife, political plotting and a passionate love story which all provide a goldmine of storylines for a dramatist.

When Victoria inherited the throne as a teenager, it followed a sad and restricted childhood controlled by her dominating mother, the Duchess of Kent, and her crony and alleged lover, Sir John Conroy.

Conroy, who managed the duchess's household and aspired to rule by influencing Victoria, created a strict and stifling system for the young princess under which she was drilled into learning five languages and prevented from mixing with other children.

Her only playmates were her dolls, she was forced to share a bedroom with her mother and her every action was closely monitored and recorded in a deliberate bid to make her weak and dependent on the cabal of Conroy, her mother and her lady-in-waiting Lady Flora Hastings, and her governesses, Baroness Lehzen and the Duchess of Northumberland.

But the plotting to control Victoria underestimated her spirit and it backfired, and when she became queen she banned Conroy from her presence and after her marriage she evicted her mother from the palace.

The TV series will dramatise all of the heartache and hell of Victoria's early years as queen, including how she suffered from Press attacks and public jeering after smear campaigns were orchestrated against her by Conroy and her other enemies, who attempted to undermine the young queen by encouraging false rumours linking her salaciously with Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, a father figure and Victoria's honest and trusted adviser.

But *Victoria* will also hook viewers with the romance of her deep love for Prince Albert, for whom she instantly fell after rejecting a series of princes paraded for her by various European royals with vested interests.

Victoria and Albert's romance is one of the great royal love stories. After their first meeting, she wrote to his uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, to thank him "for the prospect of great happiness you have contributed to give me, in the person of dear Albert. He possesses every quality that could be desired to render me perfectly happy. He is so sensible, so kind, and so good, and so amiable too. He has besides the most pleasing and delightful exterior and appearance you can possibly see."

Five days after they met again at Windsor in 1839, Victoria proposed to him and four months later they were married. On their wedding night, she wrote in her diary, "I NEVER, NEVER spent such an evening!!! MY DEAREST DEAREST DEAR Albert, his excessive love & affection gave me feelings of heavenly love & happiness I never could have hoped to have felt before! He clasped me in his arms, & we kissed each other again & again! His beauty, his sweetness & gentleness – really how can I ever be thankful enough to have such a Husband! To be called by names of tenderness, I have never yet heard used to me before – was bliss beyond belief! Oh! This was the happiest day of my life!"

With such an intense love at the core of the storyline, it is no surprise that ITV chiefs are already anticipating a massive hit with the new royal drama.

"Queen Victoria's court is the perfect setting for an epic drama – a seething hotbed of scandal, corruption and romantic intrigue, involving everyone from the humblest dresser to the Mistress of the Robes, the lowliest bootboy to the Lord Chamberlain," said Mammoth Screen's managing director Damien Timmer. "When we join Victoria in 1837, England is unrecognisable from the country it will become by the end of her reign. As she takes her fledgling steps as monarch we slowly see modern Britain emerge."

Daisy Goodwin added: "I've been fascinated by Victoria since I started reading her diaries at university. She's a woman whose personality leaps off the page – a tiny four foot 11 teenager who overnight became the most powerful woman in the world, and her candour and spirit makes for an irresistible heroine.

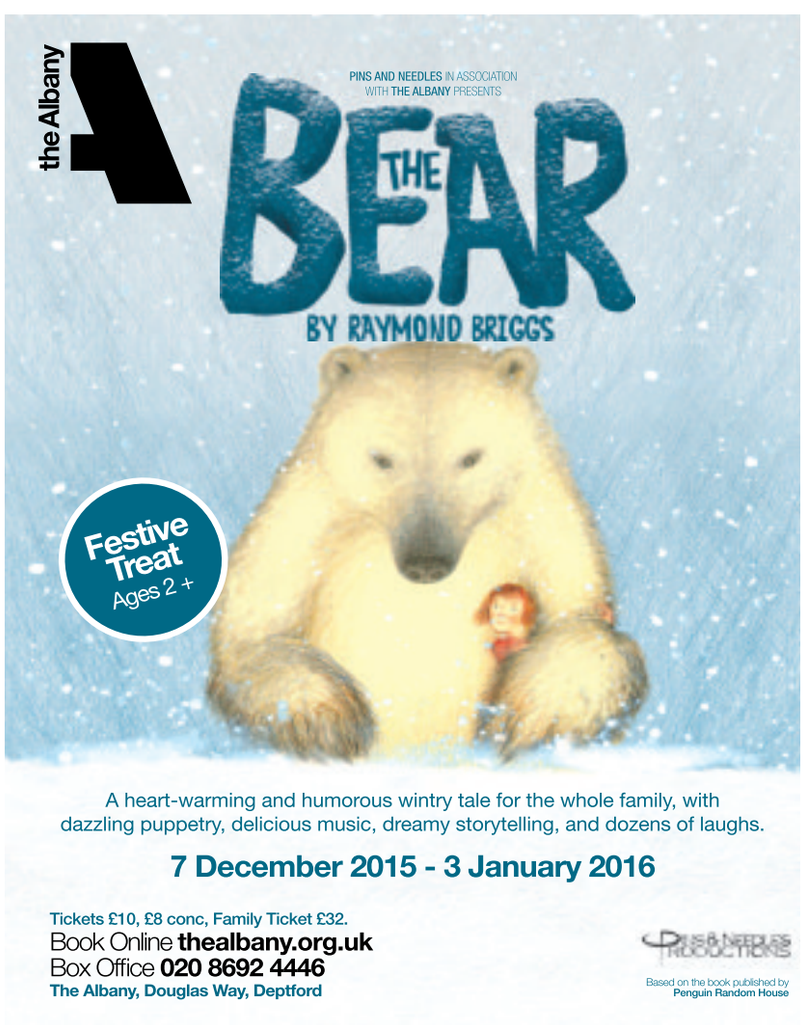
"Victoria was the first woman to have it all; she had a passionate marriage, nine children and was grandmother to most of Europe's royalty, but she also had a job, being Queen of the most important nation in the world. It wasn't easy; her reign was beset by scandal and sleaze and it was only by sheer force of personality that she prevailed."

As with the cast of *Downton Abbey*, ITV has assembled an impressive cast to carry the epic drama, which is already being pre-sold to TV companies around the world. Joining Jenna Coleman as Victoria and Rufus Sewell as Lord Melbourne, will be Paul Rhys (*The Assets, Borgia, Being Human*) as Sir John Conroy, Peter Firth (*Spooks, Undeniable, World Without End*) as the Queen's conniving uncle the Duke of Cumberland and Catherine Flemming (*Simone's Labyrinth, No Place to Go*) as Queen Victoria's mother.

Eve Myles (*Broadchurch, Torchwood, You*) plays Mrs Jenkins, the Queen's senior dresser and Adrian Schiller (*Suffragette, Endeavour*) is Penge, the Household Steward. Nichola McAuliffe (*Agatha Raisin: The Quiche of Death, Coronation Street*) is the ruthless Duchess of Cumberland, Daniela Holtz (*Phoenix, Der Verdacht*) is Victoria's governess Baroness Lehzen, and Nell Hudson (*Outlander, Call the Midwife*) plays "a mysterious new member of the household", Miss Skerrett. Tommy-Lawrence Knight (*The Sarah Jane Adventures*) also joins the royal household as the hall boy, Brodie.

Nigel Lindsay (*You, Me and the Apocalypse, The Tunnel*) is Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the Tory party and Alice Orr-Ewing (*The Theory of Everything, Pramface*) is Lady Flora Hastings, lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Kent.

Victoria will start on ITV next year.



Planning dispute sours atmosphere

ROYAL LONDON

How Duke upset hotel the royals love to use

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

MAJOR General Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor, 6th Duke of Westminster KG CB CVO OBE TD DL, and possessor of a fortune said to exceed £9 billion, is not in the good books of the Royal Family's favourite hotel retreat.

Ever since Christopher Robin, millions of visitors come down to town to look for The Queen and, like AA Milne's little lad and his guardian Alice, they just can't find her anywhere.

That's because they are looking in the wrong place. As those in the know have long known, there's no point in traipsing around Harrods hoping to bump into Her Majesty in the food hall, nor can you expect to have much luck searching for a Wales or two in any of the city's garden centres.

But if you were to go to The Goring….

London's last family-owned luxury hotel in Beeston Place has long been the secret "our place" of the Royal Family. Since the wonderfully English and exceptionally elegant hotel opened 115 years ago it has been the preferred venue for sovereigns and those in line to the throne.

Whilst other more famous hotels are the frequently-publicised haunts of the loud new money of pop stars, sheikhs and East European oligarchs, the discreet and Michelin-starred Goring with its Bollinger house champagne, Asprey products in the bathroom and Gainsborough silks on the walls is the favourite of the first family.

The Goring was filled with royals and the very best of guests for the coronations of George VI and The Queen, it was the chosen retreat of the Duchess of Cambridge before her marriage, the late Queen Mother very much adored the hotel – where she would regularly dine on the house speciality of Eggs Drumkilbo [eggs and lobster] and Her Majesty herself is known to take tea there.

Not for nothing is The Goring the only hotel in London proudly bear the royal warrant for hospitality services and with suites costing up to £8,500 a night it is, as one might expect, rather very special.

What one might not expect, however, is to check into the royal suite at London's most select hotel only to be overlooked by gawkers from a low-cost block of flats.

Yet that is the problem now facing The Goring as The Duke of Westminster's Grosvenor Estate is aiming to expand its massive property empire by building 23 affordable housing flats above shops in neighbouring Buckingham Palace Road.

Understandably, The Goring and residents of other properties facing the proposed flats have "grave concerns" about the development, which the hotel says could present "a real threat to our livelihood" and although Westminster City Council is tipped to give the nod to the planning application, robust appeals on the grounds of preserving privacy are expected.

■ ROYAL APPOINTMENT: The Goring Hotel is at odds with the Duke of Westminster.

Present crisis

NOW that his father has revealed that Prince George will be "bouncing around like a rabbit" with excitement on Christmas Eve, Kensington Palace is braced for an avalanche of toy bunnies from well-wishers.

But gift-givers are reminded of the Duke and Duchess's plea to the public not to send presents for their children.

Although they appreciate the thought, the Duke and Duchess would prefer that those keen to give a Christmas present give it instead to any of the children's charities of the capital, which is where most gifts to the young prince are passed on to anyway.

See the royals

December 15th

■ **The Duke of Gloucester,** as Joint President, Cancer Research UK, will attend a Christmas Concert of Carols, Music and Readings at St. Paul's Cathedral.

December 16th

■ **The Countess of Wessex** will attend the Canine Partners 25th Anniversary Carol Service at The Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk.

■ **The Princess Royal**, as President, World Horse Welfare, will attend the London International Horse Show, Olympia Exhibition Halls, Hammersmith.

Stampede to claim tickets for Queen's 90th birthday party

AS predicted, a Glastonbury-style rush met the recent release of 25,000 tickets for The Queen's 90th birthday celebration, causing all of the £55 to £195 seats to sell out in just three hours – but there's still a chance to be at the event of the year.

Taking place from May 12-15 in Home Park at Windsor Castle, The Queen's 90th birthday party will celebrate Her Majesty's life, her dedication to the Commonwealth and international affairs, her involvement with the Navy, Army and Air Force, and principally her love of horses.

On each evening, 900 horses and more than 1,500 performers from around the world will participate in the birthday salute to The Queen.

The 90-minute show will take the audience from her birth, through the Second World War, her marriage, her coronation and a reign of more than 60 years, and will incorporate leading actors, bands and dancers to tell the story.

Members of the Royal Family will attend each show and The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will be the guests of honour on the last night.

Although a ticket to the royal theatrical spectacular is now harder to find than a parking space in Soho, organisers have confirmed that there will be a free ballot in the New Year for 5,000 tickets to a pre-performance party on May 15. The party will take place on Windsor's Long Walk, and winners will get to see red-carpet arrivals as well as view the performance on giant screens.

Huge demand is also expected for this pre-show party and thousands who are not successful in the ballot will be disappointed. But royal fans keen to have some special souvenir of the evenings will be pleased by the news that publishers St James's House has been appointed to produce the event's official commemorative book, the only publication sanctioned and endorsed by the organisers.

"As the official publisher, we've been entrusted with telling The Queen's story," said the publishing house's chief executive Richard Freed. "Over the four evenings, more than 25,000 VIPs, guests and spectators will attend the event, and the commemorative album will enable The Queen's 90th birthday celebration to reach an even wider audience."

The big birthday bash will be screened live on the last night on ITV.

'The core of Jane Austen's story remains true... but now it's just got zombies too'

■ GORE BLIMEY: The film Pride and Prejudice and Zombies will star Lily James.

by Geoff Baker

MOST of the many screen adaptations of *Pride And Prejudice* have tended to skip the bit when Lizzie Bennet stamps on a zombie's head.

From Greer Garson's interpretation in the 1940 film version through to Keira Knightley's Oscar-nominated performance of 2005, perhaps many an audience has come away wishing if only Miss Bennet had high-kicked the walking dead.

But now *Downton Abbey's* Lady Rose MacClare is to put right what has been clearly missing for all of these years in the New Year release of a version of the Jane Austen classic which is predicted to become the most-successful ever, finally proving it is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a ninja.

Pride And Prejudice And Zombies, starring *Downton's* Lily James as Elizabeth Bennet-meets-Lara Croft is surely set to be massive fun. Combining period costume drama and action comedy horror, two of the most popular movie genres of recent years, the film deserves to win her the Academy Award for best actress with her tongue in her cheek.

Like La Knightley's sumptuous epic, this new take on the 202-year-old story looks glorious, set in the arcadian grounds of a large Regency manor house with all the lavish splendour of the period; candle-lit dinners, wonderful frocks and gracious manners. It is beautifully lit and filmed and up until this point the Austen purists will be very happy with it.

"We stay really faithful to the story," says Lily, the new screen sensation who starred in Disney's *Cinderella* this year.

"The characters and the core of Jane Austen's story remains absolutely true… but now it's just got zombies too."

The sub-plot which has been added for the doubtless delight of young movie fans, if not for the purists, pretends that as if it's not hard enough for Mrs Bennet to marry off her many daughters, now the poor woman has to put up with a Black Plague ravaging the land and those unfortunates who die of it soon rise again from the grave, reincarnated as rotting monsters who dine on human flesh.

Which of course is a terrible trial for Mrs Bennet, for when you are desperately attempting to hitch up a daughter with Mr Darcey at a ball the last thing you need is the very bad form of the servants trying to eat the house guests.

But Mrs Bennet's reputation and the lives of the eligible gentry is saved when the five unmarried daughters – Elizabeth, Jane, Mary, Kitty and Lydia – reveal a previously-unknown talent for kung fu, sword-play and dagger-slashing as they gorily tackle the intruders at the Longbourn estate.

"There's some great fight sequences for the five of us girls working together like a really scary version of The Spice Girls," says Lily, "we get to kick a lot of butt and it's huge fun.

"It was so cool, as Lizzie I'm always going about the house armed with two swords. It's fresh, it's a reimagining of the characters. But the story is such a rich one anyway, only now it's also got really cool fight scenes, hordes of the undead – and I feel that *Pride And Prejudice* has always needed zombies."

With a scabbard strapped to her thigh beneath her dress, it's something of a costume change from when she danced with The Prince of Wales as the flirty Lady Rose in *Downton Abbey* and from the sounds of it Lily relished the role.

"It was weirdly wonderful," she says. "It was somewhat odd to be sitting between takes having a cup of tea in your Jane Austen corset and you'd look to your right and there would be a blood-dripping, half-eaten zombie extra."

But like the accomplished actress she is, Lily got into the part – although at times a little too much.

"In one scene I'm slicing and dicing a zombie before stomping its skull in with my foot. But when I practised these moments on the set, though, things took a turn for the worse.

"I didn't realise that the zombie corpse at my feet was an actual person, instead of what I thought was a prop. So when the time came, I plunged my foot down on the extra's head. Of course, it was totally by accident and he was okay, but nothing is easy to do in a corset."

To accomplish all of the fighting scenes convincingly, all of the actresses spent months in martial arts training and, says Lily's co-star Sam Riley, who plays Mr Darcey, the experience turned her into a walking weapon.

"There is a scene where Darcey's proposal to Elizabeth goes horribly wrong and we end up having a fight in the drawing room, where she attacks me with a poker and a letter-opener," said Sam.

"I can speak from the experience of that that Lily is pretty lethal. But she is going to be one of the best Elizabeth Bennets we've ever seen, if not the best. Lily has got a very natural and unforced charm which I think is perfect for Lizzie. She's certainly going to be the most kick-ass Elizabeth Bennet we've ever seen."

One things is for sure, Lily James is going to be seen a very great deal in the coming weeks and months. Although she only graduated from London's Guildhall school of drama five years ago, now at the age of 26 she has already notched up considerable glittering credits; from Korrina the soldier in the heroic fantasy *Wrath Of The Titans* to the heroine British athlete in *Fast Girls*, the madam's daughter Poppy in *The Secret Diary Of A Call Girl*, her star part in *Downton* and of course the lead in *Cinderella*, for which she was unfairly trolled by envious halfwits on social media who claimed that her naturally-small body had been digitally-altered to make her the super-slim Cinders – a jibe to which Lily at the time well-responded, "Why do women always get pointed at for their bodies? And why is this whole thing happening and I'm constantly having to justify myself?

"International Women's Day has just gone, and it just feels just a bit sad that it's still happening. On the one hand it's upsetting and on the other it's just boring. I'm just very healthy and I always have been."

Although hopefully not, perhaps the trolls will kick off again when Lily is back in tiny-waisted costumes in the New Year for a lead role in the BBC's epic version of *War And Peace*, in which she plays Natasha.

Like *Pride And Prejudice, War And Peace* is one of the classics most-adapted for the screen. The first was made 100 years ago, a silent movie version starring the Russian ballerina Vera Karalli. Since then there have been myriad takes on it; the 1956 movie starring Audrey Hepburn in Lily's part, a seven-hour film released in 1966 which took the Russians six years to film and the BBC's 1972 adaptation, all 17 hours of it, which starred Morag Hood as the captivating daughter of Count Rostov.

Then there's also been operatic versions, French and Italian versions, an "electropop opera" version and at least three lengthy adaptations for radio, including 10 hours of the one which was broadcast for all of New Year's Day this year. But the new BBC version, adapted by Andrew Davies, is set to be finest yet – with a stellar cast that includes Jim Broadbent, Gillian Anderson, Brian Cox, Greta Scaachi, Kenneth Cranham and Ade Edmondson.

"It's a huge book but Andrew is such an amazing adapter he's condensed it down, but he's kept the vitality and it feels accessible and I think the audience will be really drawn in," says Lily. "But you have to read the novel too because it's so addictive. The characters are so rich and I adore Tolstoy's tone and the humour with which he describes people. It made me laugh and it made me cry."

And acting it out also made her a little sore.

"There's a lot of riding sequences but riding side-saddle in the style of the time was difficult. It's very painful – much worse than the way men ride. You have to trap your legs on the saddle and I'm very glad we women don't have to do that anymore."

Although many have played Natasha before, it remains a dream role for a young actress of quality to take on and Lily clearly found the filming a joyous experience.

"I agree with Andrew Davies that Natasha is the most lovable romantic character in literature. As she goes on an enormous journey from child to woman, you can see all her flaws. She's very unabashed but in spite of that, you still really like her because she has a huge heart and a beautiful soul. She lives in the moment and she's completely uninhibited, but of course that leads to disaster.

"But she's such a vast character to portray – I love Natasha so much and it's such a joy trying to bring her to life. I'm quite protective over her too, as an actor and as a woman it's a part that's going to stay with me. These big parts, these big heroines, they change you as an actor and as a person.

"The costumes are fantastic too, in fact I wouldn't have been able to play her without these wonderful costumes as how you're dressed really impacts on how you feel. I've loved wearing her flowing dresses – funnily enough, you actually feel more freedom in those than you do in jeans. The locations we've been to have been mind-blowing. When we were in Russia, we filmed at Catherine's Palace, outside the Winter Palace, when we filmed the ball there, I walked in and was stunned and completely silenced by the magnificent splendour of it all.

"Tolstoy is such a great writer because he always finds the core of a character. He hones in on what's important and universal, which is why *War And Peace* is such a classic. People always say this, but it feels very relevant. That's why great books are great books. This novel has stood the test of time because the themes Tolstoy discusses are eternal. The things these characters are talking about – love and death – are never going to change."

They are, however, likely to change Lily James's fortunes considerably. With *War And Peace* coming on the back of *Cinderella, Pride And Prejudice And Zombies* following *Downton Abbey* – in which she reappears as Lady Rose in the final episode this Christmas – the young actress is now widely tipped to become Britain's foremost and finest.

Next year she will take on another two leading roles, opposite Kevin Spacey and Jamie Foxx in the action crime comedy *Baby Driver* and as a Second World War British secret agent in *The Kaiser's Last Kiss* with Christopher Plummer. A genuinely-talented big new star is being very much born.

The last *Downton Abbey* will be screened on ITV on Christmas Day.

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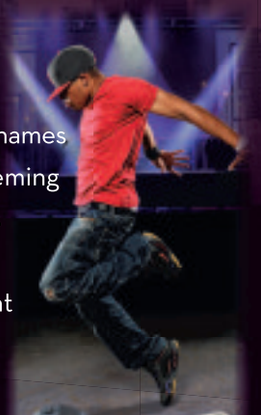

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WINE & DINE

The food and drink page for West London

Stylish festive dining

THE ARCH LONDON by Nicky Sweetland

FOR a slice of real decadence this Christmas look no further than The Arch London, in Great Cumberland Place.

This boutique hotel, which houses luxury restaurant Hunter 486, is offering some wonderfully diverse cuisine for guests to sample this festive season.

You can choose a Festive Lunch for £35 per person from now until December 30 with a set three-course lunch including shellfish bisque; traditional roast Norfolk turkey with all the trimmings and flamed Christmas pudding with brandy and vanilla sauce and mini mince pies.

On Christmas Day, guests can enjoy a lavish four-course Christmas Lunch with tea, coffee and mince pies for £75 per person. Dishes include the chef's amusette, smoked salmon terrine with crab salad, soft boiled quail eggs and lemon oil; traditional roast Norfolk turkey with roast potatoes, Brussels sprouts, chipolatas in bacon and cranberry sauce; and Christmas pudding with brandy and vanilla sauce.

■ ELEGANT DINING: In the Hunter 486 restaurant and in private rooms at The Arch London.

The Arch London provides a glamorous setting for festive party. A private festive lunch or dinner can be held in the Martini Library or Whitehall Room from £45 per person from now until December 30.

The chic boutique hotel is located minutes from Oxford Street and Marylebone Village, the perfect place to take tea during your Christmas shopping trip.

Indulge in festive treats including chocolate yule log; sticky ginger cake; cranberry and white chocolate fudge served with just baked scones. Sandwiches and savouries include roast turkey and cranberry; honey baked ham with piccalilli; Stilton cheese straws; pigs in blankets; and smoked salmon and horseradish crème fraîche roulade.

Christmas Afternoon Tea, priced at £25 per person or £38 with a glass of Tattinger Brut Reserve, will be available until January 5 2016.

An extravagant five-course New Year's Eve menu will be available in Hunter 486. Guests can end the year with an exquisite dinner in warm and intimate surroundings. Priced at £95 per person, this indulgent option includes champagne and live music from 7pm.

Delightful dishes will include scallop carpaccio with caviar, lime and shellfish vinaigrette; wild mushroom consommé with truffle tortellini; roast loin of venison with creamed Savoy cabbage and croquette potatoes; spiced poached pears and walnuts; white chocolate and honeycomb mousse with raspberries.

Step back into the cool atmosphere of Ed's Diner

IF you're looking for somewhere to rest you weary feet after a morning of frantic Christmas shopping over the next couple of weeks, I've found the perfect place writes ***Nicky Sweetland***.

The newly opened Ed's Diner, at Westfield London is a great place to get away from the modern world and immerse yourself in the simpler (and cooler!) 1950s.

Set on the top floor of Debenhams and overlooking the mall's amphitheatre, the little oasis acts as a tonic to alleviate some of the stress of the credit card useage and allows you to rest your overworked, aching arms, in an authentic American diner, complete with plush red leatherette, stainless steel and rock and roll tunes on the juke box.

I was shopping alone, but decided I would sample as much of the extensive menu as I could while was there. Well, it's rude not to isn't it?

I started with one of the milkshakes which was £4.95. I chose the banana and peanut butter flavour, which was served in a cute metal tankard and was actually a very filling but absolutely delicious start to my lunch.

For my main meal I went for a pulled pork option with my burger, which meant I had the smokey flavour of the pork atop my sumptuous beef burger all served in the classic sesame bun with cheese and salad. I was given the option of regular or large and decided I would really go for it, so I not only chose a large burger, but also went for the Ed's plate version for £14.30. This meant it came served with fries, onion rings and coleslaw. The burger was excellent, and even though all of the food is cooked when you order, didn't take too long to arrive.

After drinking the milkshake however, I only actually managed to eat around a third of the main, as I was just too full, so would suggest those with a realistic idea of their appetite should take that in to consideration when ordering.

I did also decide I had better sample dessert so went for the Lot of Waffle for £5.15. Again I was only really able to get a taste of this having made myself fully replete with the first two courses, but is was perfectly sweet and again a very large portion for the price.

The cost of my meal was £24.40, and considering I didn't need to eat again until the next day, was very reasonable for a great lunch in enjoyable surroundings.

For those with a good appetite, Ed's Diner can certainly help you to get through the chore of Christmas shopping.

■ HAPPY DAYS: Ed's Diner at Westfield shopping centre

MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Pheasant escalope Holstein

Serves four

However carefully you cook it, pheasant can get a bit dry, but I've found that brief pan-frying in dishes like this comes up a treat. You could serve this with all sorts of things from a salad to pasta tossed in tomato sauce. Save the thighs for the ragout below, and the drumsticks aren't really that edible on their own so better used in a sauce, soup or stock.

4 skinless pheasant breasts
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2-3tbsp flour
1 large egg, beaten
30-40g fresh white breadcrumbs
Vegetable or corn oil for frying
A good knob of butter
2 medium free-range eggs
4 anchovies, halved lengthways
½tbsp chopped parsley
2-3 pickled walnuts, quartered

Put one breast on a sheet of cling film that is at least double its size. With a meat or cutlet bat (a rolling pin or side of a cleaver will do), carefully bat each breast out into a neat 1cm-thick escalope. Season with salt and pepper then lightly coat with flour, patting any excess off with your hands, before passing the escalopes through the beaten egg and finally through the breadcrumbs.

Heat about 1cm of oil in a frying pan and cook the escalopes for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden, then add a knob of butter at the end of cooking and turn them once more.

Meanwhile, lightly fry the remaining eggs and place one on each escalope, then arrange the anchovies around the yolk and transfer to warmed plates. Melt the butter in a small frying pan until foaming, add the parsley and capers and spoon over the egg and escalopes. Serve immediately as they will go a bit cardboard-like if they hang around.

■ VERSATILE: Pheasant escalope Holstein

Talk Of The Town

Music I Theatre I Reviews

Success is assured for Funny Girl

Funny Girl ****

THE hugely anticipated revival of *Funny Girl,* starring Sheridan Smith, opened last week at the Menier Chocolate Factory and with tickets for the limited run selling out in just 45 minutes and a West End transfer already booked, reviews are a mere formality for the show which has already made history.

So, does the show and its beloved star live up to the high expectations, *asks Nicky Sweetland.*

The answer is without doubt a resounding yes and with tickets for the transfer to the Savoy Theatre also selling fast, I would urge you to get booking.

Smith stars as Fanny Brice, a lower east side New Yorker who becomes one of Broadway's biggest stars. The role was made famous by Barbara Streisand both on Broadway and in the 1968 film for which she shared the Best Actress Academy Award and which helped to gain her legendary status as a musical performer.

Smith is herself no stranger to awards and accolades, having previously won two Oliviers and a BAFTA as well as being appointed OBE earlier this year. Following in such renowned footsteps however, is no easy task, but Smith has become one of Britain's most beloved actresses and after watching this performance, it is obvious why she attracts such a following.

With a command of the stage which belies her stature, Smith has just the most adorable charm and brings a verve and panache to her clowning, which she's able to make feel extemporised. She redefines the term "showstopper" with first the rousing *People*, and then with the act two finale *Don't Rain On My Parade*.

It's in the comedy numbers however, where she really shows her stuff, with a timing that is perfection but always with a real substance behind the grin. In the more pensive moments as we follow her doomed relationship we completely understand that this woman has really only ever striven for affection.

For much of the show that affection is provided by the slick and suave Nick Arnstein, played by Darius Campbell, who doesn't show much complexity with his acting but sings like a dream in *You Are Woman, I Am Man*.

STAR TURNS: The hugely popular and critically-acclaimed actress Sheridan Smith stars as Fanny Brice, alongside Darius Campbell as Nick Arnstein in *Funny Girl.*

THAT'S MY GIRL: Sheridan Smith commands the stage.

His dashing presence really adds to some of the big ensemble numbers and with the help of some clever direction by Michael Mayer, makes the musical feel big budget, old school but not a bit dated.

The inventive use of travelators in the staging also gives an added thrill to both the dance numbers and scene transitions and the hidden orchestra provide sympathetic accompaniment, although the "Cornet Man" on stage may wish to offer his services to help out the pit trumpeter on occasion.

With the fabulous *Gypsy,* starring Imelda Staunton, just vacating the Savoy Theatre, it seems only right that another revival with an equally astounding star turn should take up the reins and with Sheridan Smith at the helm this show is likely to become a smash hit when it reaches the West End in April. You'll laugh, you'll cry but you won't have to worry about anyone raining on this parade.

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Talk Of The Town

london Listings

Billy Elliot at the Victoria Palace Theatre

To December 17

Billy Elliot is a funny, heart-warming and feel-good celebration of one young boy's dream in a gripping tale of triumph over adversity. This original story captured the hearts and minds of the world when the movie was released in October 2000. Nominated for three Oscars and 13 Bafta awards, this poignant film broke box office records across the world.

Elf the musical at the Dominion Theatre

To January 2

This year's festive must-see show is going to be this heart-warming extravaganza. The show, based on the 2003 film which starred Will Ferrell in the title role, was a smash hit on Broadway and is likely to be London's hottest ticket this season, despite the much reported high ticket prices. The show stars former Girls Aloud songstress Kimberley Walsh alongside West End heart throb Ben Forster, who will once again play the eponymous hero after wowing audiences last year in the role in both Plymouth and Dublin.

The Peter Pan Cup in Hyde Park

December 25

While children across London are eagerly waiting to unwrap their presents, members of the Serpentine Swimming Club are preparing to swim their traditional 100-yard (91-metre) Christmas Day race. Swimmers have met in London's Hyde Park on Christmas morning since 1864 to compete in the Christmas Day swim. The first Christmas Day swimming race was won by H. Coulter. He won a gold medal, which became the customary prize for the winner. Watch for free.

Carols in Trafalgar Square

To December 23

More than 50 carol groups each sing for an hour beneath the Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square to raise funds for voluntary or charitable organisations. Resembling something of a winter wonderland with the world-famous Christmas tree in place (an annual gift from Norway since 1947), the scene is set for an atmospheric recital of classics. From Deck the Halls and Good King Wenceslas to Ding Dong Merrily on High and The Holly and the Ivy, various tuneful groups sing to raise much needed cash for charity.

The World Goes Pop at the Tate Modern

Until January 24

Over 200 works by artists from Latin America to Asia celebrates the many faces of pop art.
This show isn't about the pop art you know, it's about the pop art that escaped the history books. And it certainly packs a punch. It's fun, engaging, colourful, revelatory, opinionated, racy and stunning. Most importantly the show illuminates how pop wasn't confined to Andy Warhol's Factory in New York or Richard Hamilton's studio in London – it was a phenomenon that reached much further, practiced by artists in Peru, Israel, Argentina, Japan, Brazil and Eastern Europe.
In an opening gallery painted scintillating red, the work quite literally pops off the walls. Here, traditional techniques are turned on their head, such as Japanese woodblock printing in Ushio Shinohara's 'Doll Festival', (1966) which is reinvigorated with the use of industrial materials like Perspex.

Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park

To January 3

This free-to-enter event includes a host of Christmas-themed fun and activities, including big top shows, an observation wheel and a huge Christmas market. Winter Wonderland provides fun, laughter and excitement for both adults and children. Skate around the stunning ice rink which circles the Victorian bandstand, enter the Magical Ice Kingdom with its 'ice forest' of frozen sculptures and gleaming ice castle, and enjoy the acrobatic wonders of shows at Zippos Circus and Cirque Beserk.

Cats at the London Palladium

Until January 2

Enduringly popular musical Cats will play at the London Palladium for a strictly limited run until January 2 2016. Beverley Knight is Grizabella the Glamour Cat. For more details visit the website *catsthemusical.com*

The Tiger Who Came To Tea at the Lyric Theatre

To January 10

Much loved story and for many has become a fable passed down through generations of families since it was first published in 1968. The book has been lovingly recreated into a musical play by David Wood and has once again taken up residence in the Lyric Theatre this Christmas. The production has been previously Olivier nominated and is likely to be a popular addition to the West End for many families hoping to give their children their first taste of theatre this year.

Through the Mill at London Theatre Workshop

To December 19

Through the Mill – a new play by Ray Rackham featuring a hit list of Judy Garland's greatest standards will get its world premiere in a three-week season at London Theatre Workshop from Tuesday, December 1 to Saturday, December 19. For more details visit their website *londontheatreworkshop.com*

British Museum of Food

To January 23

In a building at Borough Market across two floors.

Winterville 2015

To December 23

Winterville returns to Victoria Park, East London with another packed programme of attractions, entertainment and food and drink. Built around the Winterville clock tower, this little festive town offers seasonal classics and dazzling alternatives for all ages. Entry to Winterville is free, but most events and activities require a paid-for ticket.

This is a FREE listings service for local charitable and community organisations.
Email your listings to: listings@londonweeklynews.co.uk

TALLY HO! Father Christmas sets off on his annual marathon.

It's Christmas, a perfect family show

Father Christmas
Lyric Hammersmith *****

WITH so many family Christmas shows around it's difficult to know which one to choose, but a play starring the man himself has to be top of the list for me every time, *writes Nicky Sweetland.*

The Lyric Hammersmith is once again presenting Raymond Briggs' *Father Christmas* for this festive season and the play, which follows Santa as he prepares for his annual big night out, ticks every box as the perfect family production.

It's not too long, has some great music and leaves you with a wonderfully Christmassy warm glow. The play is based on Briggs' classic books, which were made famous by the 1991 animated short, and follows Santa as he awakes from a dream of sun, sea and sand only to find it is the busiest day of the year, Christmas Eve.

The grumpy old man in his pyjamas isn't obviously our hero from the start, and we actually begin by just watching Father Christmas go about his daily life as he does his household chores and cares for his pets, including his reindeer, of course. The magic really begins when darkness falls and Santa leaves the utilities of normality to travel across the globe to fulfil his vocation.

This charming adaptation has it all, from a wonderful set, some fabulous puppetry and an absolutely astounding performance from the great man himself.

I watched a lunchtime performance and was joined in the auditorium by a plethora of nursery schools bedecked in high-vis vests.

The three-year-olds were just as mesmerised by the staging as I was and it was lovely for me to reminisce back to when my offspring were that bit more wide-eyed and innocent.

Father Christmas runs at the Lyric Hammersmith until Christmas Eve. For more details visit their website *lyric.co.uk*

THE MAIN MAN: Father Christmas has a warm welcome for the audience – and the reindeer.

Silence is golden at mime festival

IF you're looking for something to cheer you up after the party season has finished for another year, the London International Mime Festival might be just the ticket.

When it first started in 1977, the festival played over just two nights. Almost 40 years later, this January's festival will host 112 performances over 29 days from 18 companies.

Almost all the productions will be UK premières and held at prestigious venues like the Barbican, Southbank Centre and the Tate Modern. The event is directed by Helen Lannaghan and Joseph Seelig and gives audiences the chance to see the very best and newest contemporary visual theatre, including cutting edge circus-theatre, animation and puppetry, mask, physical and object theatre.

The 2016 festival opens at the Shaw Theatre on Saturday, January 9, with Marcel performed by Complicité original members, Jos Houben & Marcello Magni. It then runs until February 6 at various venues across the city and includes Australia's world-famous acrobatic troupe Circa, Glasgow-based Al Seed, winner of a 2015 Total Theatre Award, and a special festival highlight from Jos Houben, who will reprise his acclaimed performance-demonstration The Art of Laughter, which explains and illustrates what makes people laugh.

Full programme details, including workshops and after-show discussion dates will be available online at the website *www.mimelondon.com*

Talk Of The Town

COLOUR CONTRAST: Lee Mead rises to stardom in Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat.

Singer delivers a show Mead in heaven

West End critic *Nicky Sweetland* enjoys Lee Mead's Christmas concert at the Garrick Theatre

Lee Mead, Some Enchanted Evening Garrick Theatre *****

TELEVISION and stage star Lee Mead helped to kick-start the festive season in the West End last week with a special Christmas concert at the Garrick Theatre.

The singer who won the BBC1 talent search to find the leading man for the revival of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* in 2007 has completed a mini tour with his show which boasts some reimagined takes of classic musical songs from yesteryear.

The show was entitled *Some Enchanted Evening* and lived up to its name as the audience, mostly made up of many of the singer's hardcore fans, were enthralled by Lee's sublime vocals and cheeky charm.

Taking to the stage along with his four-piece band wearing a garish Christmas jumper and pretending to puff on a pipe, Lee is the consummate showman and his fans, many of whom are of the more mature female variety, swooned at his every word.

The production featured songs from Lee's new album, which is set to be released on Mother's Day in 2016, but also included some Christmas classics with a wonderful big band feel and had the addition of a very over-zealous snow machine which helped to provide that extra festive sparkle.

Lee has played numerous roles in the West End but has most recently been on our screens as Lofty in the BBC1 hospital drama *Casualty*. Many of his co-stars were in the audience to support the popular entertainer and he was joined on stage by Amanda Henderson, who plays nurse Robyn Miller in the TV show.

While Lee took a break, Amanda showed off her ample singing talent – first with a fabulous swing medley before teaming up with Lee for a magical version of the Yuletide favourite, *Baby It's Cold Outside*. Henderson went on to show her real class as a performer in act two when she absolutely brought the house down with the *Wizard of Oz* standard, *Over the Rainbow.*

FANS' FAVOURITE: Lee Mead gave a polished performance at the Garrick Theatre, says *London Weekly News* theatre critic Nicky Sweetland.

Lee was also joined by Tony winning actress Tracey Bennett for a very rousing version of the Garland/Streisand duet *Get Happy/Happy Days* and by West End favourite Steven Rahman Hughes for a really unusual take on the Barbara Streisand classic, *Don't Rain On My Parade* from the currently very en vogue musical, *Funny Girl*.

With plenty of chat and giggles, the show felt like a relaxed and intimate affair even though the 650-seat theatre was virtually sold out, and the odd dropped lyric here and there just added to general atmosphere of fun.

The absolute highlight of the concert however, was Lee's tribute to the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris with his very moving rendition of *Bring Him Home* from *Les Miserables,* which left the auditorium in absolute silence.

Lee's new album, entitled *Some Enchanted Evening*, will be available in March, and the singer is planning some more tour dates on its release. If the concert at the Garrick is anything to go by, you would be well advised to book a ticket for a great night of high quality music and humorous japes.

Lee will also be playing the madcap inventor Caractacus Potts in the new touring production of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* when it visits the New Wimbledon Theatre next summer. For more details visit his website *leemead.co.uk*

Christmas crackers from Kylie

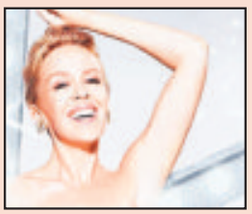
Kylie Christmas at the Royal Albert Hall *****

I FELT like I had arrived in Christmas party central at the Royal Albert Hall last week as Kylie Minogue took to the stage for a one-off, sold-out concert *writes Nicky Sweetland*.

It was the first time Kylie had headlined the iconic venue and my goodness, the pint sized princess of pop certainly knows how to throw a shindig. With Santa hats on every seat the auditorium was bedazzled with sumptuous lighting, which set the scene for a truly joyful and triumphant show.

Th star took to the stage amid dancers with pom poms and candy canes, and looked stunning in a white tutu as she treated the gathered multitude to many of the songs from her new album, *Kylie Christmas*, as well as performing some of her classic hits, which encouraged a storming response from the auditorium.

Highlights included the Pretenders classic *2000 Miles,* for which Kylie was joined on stage by the legendary Chrissie Hynde, and the really sassy and sexy



CLASSICS: Kylie Minogue.

Santa Baby, which the star performed along with her Christmas tree backing dancers, in thigh-high, fur-trimmed boots and a racey red mini dress.

Proving Christmas is a time for family, Kylie's sister Dannii Minogue appeared in a stunning silver dress to help turn up the heat with *100 Degrees*, the duet which also features on the album, and there was a very kindred mood as the audience were encouraged to belt out festive favourites *Jingle Bells* and the *Twelve Days of Christmas*.

It's with the dazzling disco tunes that Kylie really shows her mettle however, and the 5,000-strong audience were all on their feet and bouncing in unison to her biggest hits, like the dance floor filler *Spinning Around* and 80s anthem *The Locomotion*.

The cheer-filled Christmas spectacular also had a very fitting finale as snow and balloons were released onto the united flock and the idol finished the show with one of her earliest hit songs, the now vintage oldie, *Especially For You.*

The stage was adorned with a dazzling tree to act as the backdrop for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, who along with Kylie's own band provided the musical accompaniment with assistance from the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. What a fantastic opportunity for the youngsters to perform with such an absolute musical goddess and I'm sure they all felt just like I did, very *Lucky, Lucky, Lucky* to be there.

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Adrian Seal - Restaurant reviewer for getwestlondon

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Piero began working in a kitchen at 16 and was Head Chef at the age of 21 at the renowned Torre dei Corsari in Costa Verde. He has taught Italian Cuisine to chefs at some of the world's finest hotels including the Sheraton Group.

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Deaths

ALBERT FREDERICK (JOHN) FARR

unexpectedly passed away, aged 93, on 8th November 8th 2015, aged 93, in his home in Hammersmith. Born 16th April 16th 1922 in Hackney.

Visitation at Co-op Funeralcare, King Street, W6 from 12pm Monday 14th until 6pm Tuesday.

Funeral Mass will be held at Holy Trinity, Brook Green at 11:30am on Wednesday 16th December, followed by committal at Mortlake Crematorium.

Donations may be sent to the Grove Neighbourhood Centre, Hammersmith.

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14. Where an advertiser instructs / appoints an advertising agent to act on their behalf, the advertiser will remain jointly and severally liable for payment in respect for an advertisement(s) should the appointed agent fail to pay. For the avoidance of doubt, the agent acts for the advertiser and not for the publisher with the agent being responsible for notifying the advertiser of this liability.
15. All queries must be notified, preferably in writing to the accounts department of the publisher within 7 days of the invoice date.
16. All digital services are maintained in partnership with the publishers' hosting service providers. Every effort is made to ensure the continuity of these services, but some occasional technical downtime beyond the publishers control may occur. The publisher and its associated companies shall be under no liability if the production and distribution of web services is delayed or prevented by any cause beyond the control of the publisher.
17. The Publisher may provide voucher copies for published advertisements in electronic form only subject to certain criteria. Further information is available on request.
18. The copyright of advertisements produced wholly or partially by the Publishers belong to the Publishers. Advertisers may not reproduce such advertisements without the Publishers' consent.

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Boxes are open for the receipt of bona fide answers and are not available for distribution of trade canvassing matter. Original testimonials, goods, cash, cash stamps or payments of any kind must not be enclosed. A box Number and postal address are charged as part of the advertisement, i.e. Box No., centre address. There is no charge for forwarding replies.
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The service you have requested may require us to carry out a credit search at a credit-referencing agency, which will record the fact that a search has been made. We may need to share your information with other lenders and credit reference agencies. However, we will only use the information from these searches to make credit-granting decisions and, if necessary, for fraud prevention or tracing debtors.
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Local Planning Applications London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

h&f putting residents first

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990
I give notice that applications have been made to the Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham as follows:
FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA
100 Glenthorne Road London W6 0LP 2015/05305/FUL
Installation of a door to replace existing window to rear elevation at first floor level; erection of railings and obscured glass around flat roof at first floor level in connection with its use as a terrace.
Parsons Green Club Broomhouse Lane London SW6 3DP 2014/05327/FUL
Minor material amendment to planning permission refs: 2011/04089/FUL and 2012/01924/FUL to include installation of sunpower p.v. panels, satellite dishes and tv aerials on the roofs of house units 1-7 Sulivan Road.
44 Hartswood Road London W12 9NF 2015/05599/FUL
Erection of a dormer window on the existing side and rear roofslopes; installation of three rooflights in the front roofslope.
166A Uxbridge Road London W12 8AA 2015/05486/FUL
Erection of an additional floor at roof level in connection with the creation of 1 x self-contained studio flat; conversion of first and second floor level into 1 x three bedroom self-contained flat.
Abercorn House 28 - 32 Bute Gardens London W6 7DS 2015/05633/FUL
Excavation under the footprint of the building to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement comprising of 26 additional hotel rooms; erection of metal railings around the perimeter of the lightwells at ground floor level; associated landscaping.
65 Lysia Street London SW6 6NF 2015/05681/FUL
Enlargement of approved rear extension at second floor level, on top of existing back addition (amendment to planning permission 2015/01021/FUL); installation of a Juliette balcony to rear elevation at first floor level; erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side and rear of the existing back addition; excavation of front garden and part of rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the creation of the basement.
Flat 2 Old Courthouse 45 North End Road London W14 8SZ 2015/05543/FUL
Erection of a ground floor rear extension, erection of a first floor extension and installation of obscure glass privacy screens in connection with the creation of two new roof terraces at first floor level, excavation of part of the rear garden to form rear courtyard and lightwells in connection with the creation of a basement; insertion of a mezzanine floor above the kitchen.
106 Uxbridge Road London W12 8LR 2015/05629/FUL
Installation of 5no air conditioning units mounted to the rear wall of the property at first floor level; installation of a new shopfront.
106 Uxbridge Road London W12 8LR 2015/05630/ADV
Display of 1no externally illuminated fascia sign and 1no externally illuminated projecting sign to replace the existing signs at the front elevation.
Footpath At Junction Of Goldhawk Road And Cathnor Road London W12 9NS 2015/05631/FUL
Erection of a 12.5m high pole accommodating 6no. antennas; installation of 1no. equipment cabinet, 1no. meter cabinet and associated ancillary works.
Land On Site Of Former BBC White City At Corner Of Westway And Wood Lane London 2015/05650/ADV
Display of an internally illuminated single sided 96-sheet digital LED media display hoarding (measuring 3.048 metres high, 12.192 metres wide, 0.6 metres deep, and at a height from the ground of 2.0 metres), following the removal of the existing 96-sheet advertising hoarding.
Cambridge House 100 Cambridge Grove London W6 0LE 2015/05654/FUL
Replacement of existing external windows.
Cambridge House 100 Cambridge Grove London W6 0LE 2015/05662/FUL
Installation of five lantern rooflights at first floor level of the northern block.
Land North Of Westfield Shopping Centre Ariel Way London 2015/05684/FUL
Realignment of Ariel Way to include provision of a new point of egress from White City Bus Station to the proposed bus layover located under block C; provision of a taxi / valet drop-off area to the north of Ariel Way; formation of a solid central reservation prohibiting a right-turn from Ariel Way onto the short connecting link between Ariel Way and the main exit from Westfield London Car Park; the separation of access and egress to the relocated bus layover facility; a shortened bus lane, with the bus lane extending from the bus layover egress to the priority T-junction providing access to White City Bus Station; one service vehicle lay-by at the eastern end of Ariel Way; demolition and provision of new cleaning facilities on a new island site opposite the West Dimco building.
Land North Of Westfield Shopping Centre Ariel Way London 2015/05685/FUL
Relocation of the existing White City Bus Layover facilities from the East Dimco Building to below Block C of Westfield London Phase 2 including 21 layover spaces and a drivers facility.

351 - 353 New King's Road London SW6 4RJ 2015/05665/FUL
Change of use of the ground floor and basement level from financial services (Class A2) to a gym (Class D2).
17 Ravenscourt Square London W6 0TW 2015/05687/FUL
Erection of new brick wall on the southern boundary to replace the existing timber fencing; erection of 60mm spikes on the existing western brick boundary wall; associated landscaping.
1A Ravenscourt Road London W6 0UH 2015/05682/FUL
Demolition of existing office building (Class B1), ancillary walls, gates and structures, and erection of a part one, part two storey plus-basement single family dwelling house with off street car parking to the front; associated landscaping and ancillary works.
Flat A First Floor 103 Kenyon Street London SW6 6LA 2015/05668/FUL
Erection of a part one, part two storey extension at ground and first floor level to the side of the main building.
12- 13 Salisbury Pavement Dawes Road London SW6 7HT 2015/02815/FUL
Erection of an additional floor at roof level together with the installation of 4no rooflights in the front roofslope; formation of a roof terrace at third floor level to the rear elevation of no. 12 Salisbury Pavement; conversion of the third floor and part of second floor level into 1 x two bedroom self-contained flat (Amended description).
84 Fitzneal Street London W12 0BB 2015/05655/FUL
Replacement of existing single glazed timber sash windows with double glazed timber sash windows at ground and first floor levels to the front and rear elevations; replacement of existing casement window and door with double glazed casement window and door to the rear elevation at ground floor level.
The Cross Keys 57 Black Lion Lane London W6 9BG 2015/05651/FUL
Alterations to the existing detached building at the rear of the public house including the removal of the two existing windows in the front elevation and replace with a new entrance door and window; installation of four rooflights in front roofslope.
8 Buer Road London SW6 4LA 2015/05548/FUL
Erection of a rear extension at first floor level on top of the existing back addition including the installation of French doors and a Juliet balcony in the rear elevation; erection of a single storey rear extension at ground floor level to the side of the existing back addition; excavation of the front garden and part of the rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the lowering and enlargement of the existing basement; erection of a 1.7 metre high obscured glazed screen around the flat roof at second floor level, in connection with its use as a roof terrace; and installation of French doors in the rear elevation at second floor level to provide access to the proposed roof terrace.
33 Shepherd's Bush Road London W6 7LU 2015/05625/FUL
Retention of the extended width four storey side extension to ground, first, second and third floor levels.
12 Lamington Street London W6 0HU 2015/04436/FUL
Erection of a single storey rear ground floor extension; creation of a terrace at rear first floor level and associated alterations including erection of timber fence and installation of two solar panels on roof of first floor rear addition extension.
57 Musard Road London W6 8NR 2015/05646/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension; erection of a rear extension at second floor level, on top of existing back addition; erection of opaque glass screening around flat roof at second floor level in connection with its use as a terrace; erection of a single storey rear extension, to the side of the existing back addition; installation of bi folding doors to rear elevation at ground floor level; excavation of front garden and part of rear garden to form lightwells, in connection with the enlargement of the basement.
66 Hartswood Road London W12 9NF 2015/05576/FUL
Excavation of the front, rear and side gardens to form lightwells in connection with the creation of a new basement; erection of a boundary wall in between 66 and 64 Hartswood Road; erection of an external staircase from basement to garden level at the rear of the property; alterations to the pitch roof of single storey back addition to form a flat roof; alterations to the rear fenestration at ground floor level.
FOR CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT (DEMOLITION WORK)
FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
Flat 2 Old Courthouse 45 North End Road London W14 8SZ 2015/05544/LBC
Erection of a ground floor rear extension, erection of a first floor extension and installation of obscure glass privacy screens in connection with the creation of two new roof terraces at first floor level, excavation of part of the rear garden to form rear courtyard and lightwells in connection with the creation of a basement; creation of glazed rooflight to ground floor living room; insertion of a mezzanine floor above the kitchen; replacement of existing windows and doors with new enlarged doors to new ground floor extension; installation of new staircase to first floor extension; installation of new walls and door to master bedroom.
Access Self Storage 184 Shepherd's Bush Road London W6 7NL 2015/05450/LBC
Alterations and amendments to works consented under 2013/00455/LBC involving an amended profile to the new roof, installation of two funnels on the rear loading bay and change in size and location of the louvres on the north and south elevations of the building.

FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY AFFECT THE SETTING OR CONTEXT OF A LISTED BUILDING
Flat 2 Old Courthouse 45 North End Road London W14 8SZ 2015/05543/FUL
Erection of a ground floor rear extension, erection of a first floor extension and installation of obscure glass privacy screens in connection with the creation of two new roof terraces at first floor level, excavation of part of the rear garden to form rear courtyard and lightwells in connection with the creation of a basement; insertion of a mezzanine floor above the kitchen.
351 - 353 New King's Road London SW6 4RJ 2015/05665/FUL
Change of use of the ground floor and basement level from financial services (Class A2) to a gym (Class D2).
53 Westwick Gardens London W14 0BS 2015/05621/FUL
Erection of a rear roof extension involving an increase in the ridge height by 1 metre; installation of 2no. rooflights in the front roof slope.
Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications should do so by **3rd January 2016**. See below for ways of commenting on applications.
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 2013
NOTICES UNDER REGULATION 13
Mackenzie Trench House Lillie Road London SW6 7PD 2015/04296/VAR
I give notice that is applying to HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL for planning permission to carry out the following development: Variation of Condtions 2 to allow alterations including: stone panelling around the first and second floor window, powder-coating to air vent covers, roof garden balustrading changed to railings, smoke vent extract and flues, brick boundary changed to provide secure cycle storage, ground floor raised by 300mm, wall between car ramp and flat 6 changed to brickwork, changes to position of windows, garden layouts, basement plant room and car parking provision increased to 18, Flats 8, 14 & 20 amended to two bedroom, reduce terraces to Flats 25 and 27, add terrace to Flat 28, change area of PV panels and omit; Vary wording of Conditions 13 and 15 to use BS8233:2014; Remove Condition 22 for Sustainable Homes and Vary Condition 23 to allow an updated Energy Statement date August 2015 in connection with planning permission ref: 2014/03969/FUL granted 21st August 2015.
The proposal constitutes a major development.
2 Iffley Road London W6 0PA 2015/05579/FUL
I give notice that Mr Howard Thatcher is applying to HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL for planning permission to carry out the following development: Erection of an additional floor at roof level; partial demolition of the first floor rear back addition and single storey rear extension to form new courtyard area at ground floor level to the rear of the property; installation of 3no rooflights in the side roofslope and replacement of 2no windows with new windows to the side elevation at first floor level; installation of new windows to the rear elevation, new doors to the side and rear elevation at ground floor level; alterations to the front fenestration at ground floor level to include installation of a new windows and doors to replace the existing door; change of use of the ground floor from light industrial use (Class B1) into residential; conversion of the building into a single family dwellinghouse.
Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications should do so by **3rd January 2016**. See below for ways of commenting on applications.
Signed: **NIGEL PALLACE**
Executive Director for Transport and Technical Services
on behalf of HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM COUNCIL
You can view applications, make comments and monitor their progress on our website: www.lbhf.gov.uk/planning. Click on the 'Planning Online' logo on the Planning Home Page.
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You can also inspect details of applications using computers at our office RECEPTION FIRST FLOOR HAMMERSMITH TOWN HALL EXTENSION KING STREET W6 between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.
If you want to make comments on applications please E-mail them through our website or post them to
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE ENVIRONMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT TOWN HALL KING STREET W6 9JU by the date shown above. Please include the application reference number and the name of the planning officer. We will try to consider any representations received after the date indicated but this cannot be guaranteed so please reply promptly. For initial enquiries call our information and reception service on **020 8753 1081** or **020 8753 1082**.

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Hammersmith & Fulham Council

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Ofsted 2008 'an Outstanding school'

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INTERVIEWS WILL BE HELD ON: Monday 11th January 2016.

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Hasselbaink hails 'magnificent' fans

NEW Queens Park Rangers manager Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink took satisfaction from Saturday's goal-less draw with Burnley and then paid tribute to the "magnificent" Rangers fans.

The Dutchman, in charge for the first time since his appointment, received rapturous applause as he waved to all four sides of the ground when introduced before the game.

He said: "The welcome I got was just magnificent – and a big thank you to the QPR supporters. They made me feel one of them and I really appreciate it."

Before the game, Hasselbaink had used social media to express his delight at being offered the chance to manage in the Championship at Loftus Road just 13 months after being handed his first management role in English football at Burton Albion, then of League Two.

"I feel absolutely privileged to be handed the opportunity to manage Queens Park Rangers #QPR" Hasselbaink (@jf9hasselbaink) tweeted to his 35,300 Twitter followers.

Tweets

In five subsequent carefully worded tweets that morning, he added: "It is my intention to leave no stone unturned to ensure this club move forward and meet with success. #QPR

"I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the owners for giving me the opportunity to manage this great club. #QPR

"The overwhelming messages of support from the fans following my appointment gives me good cause to be very optimistic going forward. #QPR.

"I am confident hard work and unity will eventually bring its own rewards. #QPR

"They are a club steeped in history and one I have always taken a keen interest in and privately harboured dreams of managing one day #QPR."

Hasselbaink got QPR playing with vigour and positive intent against promotion contenders Burnley.

And he would have been celebrating his first victory in the Hoops' dug-out had Grant Hall's goal-bound header not been cleared off the line by Scott Arfield in the dying seconds of a rousing game in W12.

"I learnt a lot today," said the immaculately black-suited Hasselbaink. "I learnt that QPR has magnificent support.

"I learnt that we have a team that is willing – willing to work for each other.

"There were a lot of positives to take from the game. We were committed, we did a lot of things right.

"The guys are a tight group. They want to succeed and be better players.

"If we play like we did today, especially in the first half, I am confident we can be successful.

"I thought we expressed ourselves well, especially in the first half when we were the better team. The players showed that they want to do things right.

learn things

"We suffered a little in the second half but that can sometimes be a good thing, because you learn things about the players.

"Let's not forget one thing, we came up against a very, very good team. Burnley are very well organised, very hard to break down and I thought we gave them a really good game.

"You have to respect that good teams are always going to have spells but I thought we coped very well when they had those spells.

"I thought we did ever so well."

QPR were unable to find a breakthrough, despite being the leading second tier scorers at home.

But an upbeat Hasselbaink added: "I'll take a 0-0 because the performance level was right.

"If we keep performing at this level, we should win more than we lose."

For that to happen, though, QPR need a fully fit Charlie Austin firing on all cylinders. His ongoing calf problem confined him to the subs' bench until he received the call from 'JFH' with 30 minutes left to play against his former club.

"Charlie isn't quite where we need him to be, fitness-wise," said the new boss, who knows what is required from a team's main striker. "We want to make sure that he has another really good platform to come back.

"We can't afford for him to be missing for a long time, because he is an important player for us."

Hasselbaink has vowed that no other club will be permitted to 'pinch' Austin in the January transfer window, although R's can't be very confident of hanging on to a proven goalscorer who can walk away for nothing, on a free transfer, next summer when his current contract expires.

Hasselbaink was speaking before Tuesday's home league game against Championship leaders Brighton and Saturday's visit to Bristol City, where he will be hopeful of collecting his first win.

QPR under-18s will face a very difficult task against Manchester United in the FA Youth Cup on Tuesday, December 22.

The third round tie will be played at Leigh Sports Village (7.00pm), where admission on the night is free.

LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW
With Tony McDonald

JIMMY Floyd Hasselbaink feels "privileged".

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Saturday, December 19
CHELSEA v Sunderland, 3.00
Bolton Wanderers v FULHAM, 3.00
Bristol City v QPR, 3.00
Saturday, December 26
CHELSEA v Watford, 3.00
Derby County v FULHAM, 3.00
Ipswich Town v QPR, 3.00
Monday, December 28
Manchester United v CHELSEA, 5.30
Huddersfield Town v QPR, 3.00
Tuesday, December 29
FULHAM v Rotherham United, 7.45

BETTIN£ BANTER

THANKS must go to QPR for their part in landing us a 100-1 fourfold draw accumulator on Saturday.

Burnley are never an easy side to break down while, on the other hand, they are not the most lethal in front of goal either, so a stalemate on Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink's Hoops debut was always on the cards.

Along with the Loftus Road encounter, I also included the draws at West Ham (v Stoke City), Mansfield (v Leyton Orient) and Derby County (v Brighton), where Rams' Chris Martin went to the top of my Chrimbo card list with an 88th-minute penalty equaliser!

As all punters can imagine, enduring stoppage time at four grounds as the seconds ticked by before the final whistles sounded was pure purgatory. But you need plenty of luck on your side in this game.

This Saturday, I'll be all over the goals market for QPR's game at Bristol City. Only second-from-bottom Rotherham United have conceded more than the 33 goals the Cherries have leaked this season.

More to the point, 18 of those went in at Ashton Gate, where they have won just twice in 10 home league matches and were hammered by Fulham not so long ago.

So I'm backing JFH to secure his first win on the road as QPR boss.

I'd also be tempted to have a modest punt on Fulham at healthy odds to win at Bolton, who have all sorts of problems on and off the field. Although these two teams occupy the bottom two places in the Championship form guide, based on their last six league matches, Fulham have too much creative flair for Bolton's liking.

I'll take Moussa Dembele to keep his good run going in an away win for Whites.

Meanwhile, at Stamford Bridge, Chelsea will easily justify their short odds-on price to send Sunderland packing, in what could be a the start of a run of victories over the hectic holiday period.

No doubt Sam Allardyce will be fine-tuning the red-and-white striped bus ready for parking across the halfway line but it will take more than that to keep out a Chelsea side ready to start climbing the table. If Blues score early, they could go on to notch four or five against a woeful Black Cats defence.

In fact, I have every confidence in Blues returning from their next away game, at Manchester United, with all three points too. Mourinho will win the battle of the 'Special Ones'.

Good luck – and remember to always bet responsibly.

Tony McDonald

GOING off: Flashback to a stormy night when PSG last came to Stamford Bridge

French champs await Chelsea

FOR the third consecutive season, Chelsea will face Paris-Saint Germain in the Champions League.

Monday's Round of 16 draw in Nyon produced the toughest possible outcome for Blues.

Last season the teams met at the same stage, with the French champions progressing on away goals after a dramatic game, while in 2014 Blues edged a tight quarter-final encounter.

Second leg at home

Having qualified for the knockout stages of the competition as group winners, Chelsea will play the second leg at home.

The first leg will take place in Paris on Tuesday, February 16, with the return at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday, March 9.

Laurent Blanc's side sailed through their group with 13 points from six matches, despite finishing runners-up to Real Madrid, and won't be fazed by another trip to west London.

Unbeaten PSG are running away with Ligue One, 17 points clear of the chasing pack with 15 wins and three draws from their first 18 games.

By drawing them out of the hat again, Jose Mourinho's team will avoid a less daunting test against one of PSV Eindhoven (Holland), Benfica (Portugal), Juventus (Italy), Roma (Italy) and Gent (Belgium).

For Chelsea followers, the draw will evoke memories of PSG's previous visit to SW6, on that stormy night last March, when Zlatan Ibrahimovic was red-carded, former Blues defender David Luis forced extra-time with a late header and Thiago Silva sent the 10-men through on the away goals rule after a pulsating game ended 2-2 and the tie 3-3 on aggregate.

Mixed reaction to Finn call–up

MIDDLESEX will probably view Steven Finn's call-up to the England Test squad for their cricket tour of South Africa with mixed feelings.

The 26-year-old fast bowler missed the series against Pakistan in October and November because of a bone stress injury.

But he returned to action last weekend for England Lions in the United Arab Emirates, playing in two Twenty20 matches.

"I've been really pleased with the way things have gone with the Lions," he said.

Excited

"I've bowled my overs and my foot has come through fine. I'm excited by the prospect of linking up with the team out in South Africa."

However, Finn is unlikely to feature in the first Test in Durban on Boxing Day and his county will have all fingers crossed that he comes through the tour unscathed and is fit and ready to bowl next spring.

Rather than risk further damage to his foot, Finn could probably have done with having his feet up this winter.

MIDDLESEX paceman Steve Finn will be hoping to return from South Africa in good shape

London Weekly News

SPORT

Thursday, December 17th, 2015 ● SPORTS DESK: 07711 169 427

■ DIEGO Costa shoots for goal during last week's European win against Porto Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

'Dreaming' of fourth place

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

JOSE Mourinho will be looking to Saturday's league match with Sunderland as the springboard needed to push the Blues up the Premier League, away from the relegation zone and, perhaps, a charge towards the top four and a coveted Champions League slot.

The Chelsea boss will be looking to emulate last season's 3-1 win at The Bridge, when a Diego Costa goal and a brace from Loic Remy on the final day of the season saw Blues clinch the League title eight points ahead of Manchester City.

In a season in which anyone can beat anyone, and too many have beaten Chelsea so far, Mourinho needs the boost of three points from the Black Cats to send a signal to those they face in the hectic Christmas and New Year period that they are still a force to be reckoned with.

He said: "Before we lost three points against Bournemouth I was absolutely convinced about finishing fourth in the table and I was convinced about a great December for us.

"The reality is that some clubs are doing well and others are not capable of doing what they are used to. It's not easy for the top clubs to win three, four, five or 10 matches in a row now, so who knows?

Dream of fourth

"If we can get a run of four or five consecutive victories, because none of the other clubs are doing that, maybe we have a chance to make up the distance and dream of finishing fourth. While it's mathematically possible, we have to try."

One man who thinks Chelsea can not only up their performance but even become champions again is former Blues and England star Joe Cole.

Cole, 34, who cost £6.6million from West Ham in 2003, and for seven years was a star of Chelsea's midfield, believes Mourinho has what it takes to make Chelsea great again.

"Anything is possible, and that's why we watch football," said Cole, now plying his trade with League One promotion contenders Coventry City.

"You can't rule them out as champions. That team could beat everyone from now until the end of the season.

"The main thing you've got to think about is you've got the best manager in the world there – fact. That's not down to opinion, he's the most decorated over the different leagues.

"I'm not saying it's going to happen but it's football. It'll be interesting in the next few weeks. The fans haven't turned, they're right behind the manager and the chairman.

"For Chelsea to move forward, you've got to stick with the manager and let him do what he does best. I don't think anyone can dispute his record and I'm sure he'll be relishing turning it around.

"What separates Mourinho from the rest is his common touch, how he relates to his players and gets the best out of each individual in the squad, whether you're the captain or the third-choice goalkeeper."

This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

Oscar, who starred in last week's 2-0 home Champions League win against Porto that secured top spot in the group, recognises that Chelsea must replicate that high level of performance in the match against Sunderland at The Bridge and their other upcoming Christmas fixtures against Watford and Manchester United.

He said: "Because everyone knew it was an important game, we were very concentrated. We knew we needed to win, everybody was confident and we played better.

"The manager said to stay confident and show our quality. The team played very well and we won the game. But we need to play like this in the Premier League as well. We need to win our next game, it's very important for us."

Speaking ahead of Monday's visit to high-flying Leicester City, Oscar added: "We need to win two or three games in a row to keep the confidence.

"The win against Porto was important for everyone. It's difficult when we lose a game, for the players and Jose.

"We now need to focus on the Premier League and play like we did against Porto."

One man in desperate need to score to bolster his flagging confidence is striker Diego Costa, and Oscar is confident that better times beckon for the Brazil-born Spanish front man.

"Diego played very well and he knows he's very important for the team," he said. "Hopefully in the next game he will play even better. He tried everything to score a goal.

"It's difficult for a striker when you're not scoring but the confidence is coming back, he's happy."

Sunday cup tie will be live

■ **CHELSEA will face either Leyton Orient or Scunthorpe United in the the FA Cup third round at Stamford Bridge on Sunday, January 10 at 2.00pm. It will be broadcast live on BT Sport.**

Young Dane scoops award

■ **DEFENDER Andreas Christensen has been named 2015 Danish Talent of the Year – an award given to an outstanding player under the age of 22.**

Christensen, 19, has been on loan from Chelsea to Bundesliga club Borussia Monchengladbach since July. Recent impressive performances against Bayern Munich and Manchester City have elevated his status.

Christensen made his Chelsea debut in last season's Capital One Cup tie at Shrewsbury and earned his first full international cap for Denmark against Montenegro in June.

■ **Paris-bound again in Europe – see page 27**

Focus on Craven Cottage

By TONY McDONALD

Old failings haunt new man

EVEN in this unpredictable, volatile world there are certain things that can be relied upon 100 per cent: death, taxes . . . and Fulham conceding a goal from a corner.

Sure enough, it happened again on Saturday, when west London neighbours Brentford visited Craven Cottage and salvaged a 2-2 draw, which was the least they deserved for their first half dominance.

New 'Senior Coach' Stuart Gray is the latest incumbent to bemoan this common Fulham failing. Speaking after his first game in the dug-out, as successor to Kit Symons and previous interim Peter Grant, he said: "After getting our noses in front, I felt we'd go on and win it but our Achilles heel this season has been defending corners. That's 14 we've conceded this season, so that's frustrating.

"With this group of players we're underachieving. We need to stop giving away soft goals. At the moment we're not stopping enough free balls into the box and defending them properly.

"But I can't fault the effort and commitment and I'm pleased with the response we had after going 1-0 down. Probably a draw was a fair result but we've got to start putting points on in threes and we went for the win."

Fulham fell behind to an Alan Judge penalty after Jazz Richards tripped Jake Bidwell millimetres inside the 18-yard box. Whites levelled through James Tarkowski's headed own goal before Moussa Dembélé netted his 10th of the season with a deft finish to put Fulham in front, only for Jack O'Connell to equalise.

This was an open, end-to-end derby clash that either side could have won. The fixture compiler could have been kinder than to present Gray with a Bees team that had lost only one of its previous nine games.

"We were playing a side full of confidence," said Gray. "They've got a new manager (Dean Smith) and they started a bit brighter than us. We were disappointed to go a goal down. Richards got a touch on the ball but Bidwell's momentum took him over his leg.

"I told them: 'Make sure you come off that pitch physically knackered' and they've done that, they've put a shift in, we just didn't get that bit of luck."

Fulham visit the Championship's bottom club, Bolton Wanderers, on Saturday but who knows whether Gray – assisted by Steve Wigley – will still be in charge? When the former Sheffield Wednesday and Southampton manager was brought in last week, Fulham announced that it was simply a ship-steadying exercise.

Chief football officer Mike Rigg said: "The search for a permanent head coach goes on but it is important to ensure we focus fully on getting results back on track while this process continues.

"Stuart has a proven track record in both coaching and management with caretaker spells at Burnley and Wolverhampton Wanderers prior to joining Sheffield Wednesday as head coach. He also had a full season in charge at Sheffield and secured their highest finish for six years, along with a record number of clean sheets.

"We all know that we have suffered from defensive frailties all season and Stuart will be focusing on that straight away. He has first-hand knowledge of the Championship and knows how to get the very best out of a group of players, so his work with the first team will be pivotal as the search continues."

JIMMY HAILS 'MAGNIFICENT' FANS – page 27